THE STORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

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THE STORY OF
ANCIENT EGYPT
AND
ITS NEIGHBOURING PEOPLES
THE HEBREWS, PHŒNICIA, CARTHAGE

BY

ROBINSON SOUTTAR, M.A., D.C.L.

31540

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	DYNASTY.	CAPITAL.	DATE.
		OLD KINGDOM.	B.C.
1	Egyptian.	This.	
2	,,	This.	
3	,,	Memphis.	
4	,,	Memphis . .	4000
5	,,	Memphis.	
6	,,	Elephantiné.	
7	,,	Memphis.	
8	,,	Memphis.	
9	,,	Heracleopolis.	
10	,,	Heracleopolis .	3000
11	,,	Thebes.	
		MIDDLE KINGDOM.	
12	Egyptian.	Thebes.	
13	,,	Thebes.	
14	,,	Xois.	
		HYKSOS.	
15, 16	Asiatic.	Tanis (Zoan) .	2000
		NEW KINGDOM.	
17	Egyptian.	Thebes . .	1738
18	,,	Thebes . .	1587
19	,,	Thebes . .	1327
20	,,	Thebes . .	1181
21	,,	Tanis . . .	1060
22	,,	Bubastis . .	945
23	,,	Tanis . . .	810
24	,,	Sais . . .	721
25	Ethiopian.	Thebes . .	715
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THE STORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

CHAPTER I

THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

EGYPT is the name of that country which stretches from the Mediterranean southward along the western shore of the Red Sea and is bisected from north to south by the Nile. As the river approaches the Mediterranean it divides into many channels, forming a network of rivers and canals, so that this part, called Lower Egypt or the Delta, is well-watered and fertile throughout. The Delta is indeed the creation of the Nile—an encroachment on the Mediterranean formed by the soil which is washed down by the river in such abundance. Above Cairo, for many hundreds of miles, the Nile flows in a single stream between parallel ranges of bare and barren hills, and as the country is entirely dependent on the river for its fertility, Upper Egypt is for practical purposes little more than a strip of land of great length, but only from four to twelve miles wide. At Khartoum the river divides into two streams, "the Blue Nile," which receives its waters from the mountains of

Abyssinia, and "the White Nile," which flows from the lakes and mountains of equatorial Africa. The thawing of the winter snow in the mountain ranges, together with the heavy rainfall in the spring, causes great floods to pour down these branches about the middle of the year. The flood of the Blue or Abyssinian Nile reaches Khartoum in the middle of May, and such is its volume and velocity that even after it has joined the White Nile its waters keep their colour and identity for 300 miles. Assouan or Syene at the first cataract is reached by the flood early in June—Cairo about ten days later. The river is not allowed to spread over the valley at will but is carefully hemmed in by embankments, and every piece of arable land has its own ramification of canals and dykes. From the beginning of July public criers announce the condition of the river, and when it has reached a certain height, permission is given to break dykes and open sluices, after which the waters are guided by the inhabitants from enclosure to enclosure until Egypt has been transformed into a long, narrow lake, dotted with towns and villages, built on such elevated places as can be found. Southward, in the Soudan, the river reaches its full height in August, at Cairo in September, then it falls slowly, and by December has returned to its ordinary channel. The waters of the Nile are turbid, but in this turbidity lies their value, for as they sink they leave so rich a top dressing on the land that two or even three crops can be obtained every year. Thus with comparatively little labour the cultivator obtains a splendid return, and from the earliest

times agriculture has been the chief source of Egyptian wealth.

The soil of Egypt is specially suitable for grain. Oats, wheat, barley, maize and rice grow in such abundance that the country was the granary of the ancient world. Vegetables also flourish, and it is easy to understand the longing of the Israelites when in the desert for "the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick." Dates, figs, oranges, lemons and vines also abound, and textile plants such as hemp, cotton and flax.

Egypt is not rich in trees; the sycamore and date palm grow freely, but most other trees die out unless cultivated with care.

Most Egyptian animals have been imported. The horse is thought to have been introduced about the time of the Hyksos' invasion—the camel still later. Neither the ox, goat, nor ass is of native origin, though all thrive well.

In early times the hippopotamus and crocodile were common in Egypt, and were hunted by the wealthy even as far north as the Delta, but they have now retired—the hippopotamus to equatorial Africa, the crocodile above the second cataract. Birds are plentiful, and fish abound; unfortunately snakes and scorpions also abound, and insect life is of every variety, and in quantity beyond measure.

As all prosperity in Egypt depends on the river there is yearly great anxiety lest it should rise too little or too much. Too little would mean a poor harvest; too much, the destruction of valuable property. We need not wonder then that the Egyptians worshipped the river and

had temples in every province to the Nile god.

We know little about the origin of the Egyptian people. The Bible tells us that the sons of Ham were "Cush, and Mizraim, and Put, and Canaan." Cush may be taken as Ethiopia, Put as Libya, Canaan as Phœnicia, and Mizraim as Egypt. As to how the original inhabitants reached Egypt there is much difference of opinion—some thinking that they came from Asia by way of the Isthmus of Suez, some that they came from Mesopotamia skirting Arabia, crossing the Red Sea and thus reaching the Nile Valley, others that they, as well as the other races of the ancient world, "are descended from a single family whose original seat was on the shores of the great lakes of equatorial Africa," and others that they came from the west, from the Mediterranean slope of the African continent. The weight of the evidence seems to be in favour of Asiatic origin, especially as "the oldest remains of Mesopotamian civilisation appear to exceed in antiquity any hitherto brought to light in Egypt."

The Egyptians were idolaters, and although they doubtless started with a conception of one Supreme Being, Lord of Heaven and Earth, they soon lost sight of this elementary doctrine. There were hundreds of gods in Egypt—each city having its patron deity, each family its favourite god. Certain animals and birds were sacred: the cow, cat and ibis throughout Egypt, the crocodile, hippopotamus and goat in specific localities.

At Memphis a bull called Apis, chosen by

certain marks, was worshipped as an incarnation of the god Path; at Heliopolis another was worshipped as an incarnation of Ra; at Thebes Minu was worshipped in similar fashion, and at Hermonthis the god Montu. When a sacred bull died, he was buried with regal splendour, the country mourned and business was suspended until another had been found bearing the sacred marks.

Some part of the religious creed of the Egyptians was unexceptionable. They believed in the divine origin and immortality of the soul. They recognised that in this life man had to struggle against evil, and taught that his condition hereafter depended upon his actions here. But these simple truths were hidden under much superstition and mummery. As time went on, the kings also became objects of worship, both whilst they lived and after death—their pyramids being endowed that priests might pay divine honours to their memory.

From the earliest historic times until it became a Roman province Egypt had monarchical government. Next to the kings down to the age of the eighteenth dynasty came the nobles, having hereditary rights which modified the despotism of the Crown; next came the priests, often members of aristocratic families, controlling the temples with their rich endowments, then the military and official classes mostly drawn from the families of the aristocracy and priesthood, and enjoying many exemptions and privileges, and finally, under all and supporting all, the toiling masses upon whom the wealth of the country depended. All the way up the social ladder, stepping from class to class, every man

acknowledged a superior, who, in exchange for service, obtained for his client such justice and protection as were to be had.

For convenience the country was divided into provinces or nomes. There were about forty of these, the number and boundaries varying from time to time; and the local administration was responsible amongst other things for rectifying the boundaries when altered by the frequent encroachments of the river.

Royal taxation was based on produce and was usually a tenth, but others besides the king claimed a share, so that the gross burdens were generally excessive and often collected with cruelty. There was also much forced labour on the king's lands, on the lands of the nobles, and in connection with the building of tombs and temples. Some of the Pharaohs, now esteemed great because they left masses of masonry behind them, were brutal tyrants, and their names were execrated by the Egyptian people.

Though the life of the humbler classes in Egypt left much to be desired, it is noteworthy that there was no impassable barrier between the orders such as exists in countries where caste prevails. Education, both primary and secondary, was open to all, and though the young aristocrat naturally started with an advantage, yet the son of the poor man might distance him if he showed greater merit. Indeed we find in Egypt a spirit all too rare, by which humility of origin is held to redound to one's credit, the fact that a man's ancestors were not known to history being noted on his monument as matter for proper pride.

Egypt must always be famous for its unique treatment of the dead. Of course poor people buried their dead in the sand in the ordinary way, and foreigners had their own methods of burial, but the bodies of wealthy Egyptians were treated very elaborately. First they were embalmed, then swathed in linen, over this a preparation of pasteboard was placed, the shape of the face and hands being retained; next came a casing of wood, and then a stone sarcophagus. The tomb might be for one only, or it might be a family vault sufficing for several generations and having a chamber where the pious might pray for the repose of the dead. The respect shown to the dead was a commendable feature in Egyptian character, and to the fact that Egypt became by virtue of this custom one long cemetery, we owe much of our knowledge of her ancient history.

The greatest of Egyptian historians was Manetho, who wrote in the reigns of the first Ptolemies. His works are lost, but fragments survive in the books of other writers, and from these lists of the kings have been compiled. The names of many kings mentioned by Manetho have also been found upon monuments, so that as regards mere names we have a good deal of information. When we come to the question of chronology, however, there is much difficulty, for Manetho, working from material which must have been meagre at the best, attempted to tabulate the dynasties for thousands of years—an impossible task. Modern historians have gone to infinite trouble to fix dates for the various dynasties, and they are now fairly well ascertained

for fifteen centuries before the Christian era. Prior to that time they can only be looked upon as approximative.

Like most nations the Egyptians prefaced history with mythology, dynasties of gods, demi-gods and heroes filling up the blank of prehistoric time. Even when we emerge from manifest fable and come to those dynasties of Manetho which are apparently historic, we have scarcely any information concerning the first three, though they are said to have covered a period of nearly 1000 years. Fragmentary remains of this early period have been found, but for historic purposes we must begin Egyptian history with the fourth dynasty. At the same time, the fact of political organisation, the existence of writing, and the character of the monuments make it clear that Egypt at the beginning of the fourth dynasty was not in her infancy as a state.

It is interesting to remember that to our grandfathers both Egyptian history and the Egyptian language were almost sealed books. Just a century ago a monument was discovered known as the Rosetta stone, upon which there was a trilingual inscription, one of the languages being Greek. Analysing the second transcript, Akerblad, a Swede, in 1802 built up a portion of what we now know to have been the alphabet of the later running hand. Some years after Thomas Young identified the names of Ptolemy and Berenice in the hieroglyphic portion of the inscription. Then Champollion took up the work, and having identified the name of Cleopatra on an obelisk, by a careful comparison of the text on the obelisk with that on the Rosetta

stone made a great advance. He died in 1831 and Egyptology was depressed for a time. The discoveries of Rawlinson and Layard gave a fresh impulse to Oriental study, and during the last few years wonderful progress has been made. At the beginning of the century Egyptian was an unknown language, now there are twenty professors teaching it in the universities of Europe and America. Assyriology is also receiving much attention, and every year adds to our knowledge of Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia.

CHAPTER II

THE OLD KINGDOM—DYNASTIES I.-XI.

DYNASTY IV.—*The Pyramid Builders: Sneferu, Khufu, Khafra, Menkaura.*

THE title of Pharaoh, "Great House," was given by the Egyptians to their successive kings. The first concerning whom we have much historic certainty is Sneferu, of whom we have two relics — a pyramid at Medum, forty miles south of Cairo, and a rock tablet in the Sinaitic peninsula.

In early times when a Pharaoh ascended the throne he began preparing his tomb, which generally took the form of a pyramid. The pyramids of Gizeh—still the wonder of the world—were built by Khufu, Khafra and Menkaura, but one even more striking was erected by Sneferu. The Gizeh pyramids were designed in a way which shows that their full size must have

been contemplated from the beginning, but Sneferu built the inner chamber first and then laid on layers of masonry until a sufficient size had been attained, when he placed a smooth casing over all. Around his pyramid are ranged tombs of his nobles and priests, and in one of these have been found two of the finest statues of antiquity—those of Rahotep, a royal official, and Nefert his wife. They are of painted limestone, and in excellence of workmanship and artistic expression are superior to work of a later age.

The rock tablet in the Sinaitic peninsula represents Sneferu in the act of striking a Bedouin with a club, the inscription giving the king's name and terming him vanquisher of a foreign people. The Nile Valley was poor in metals, and the tablet proves that even in these early days the Egyptians were searching for the copper ore and precious stones which were to be found amongst the rocks of the Sinaitic peninsula.

The second king of the fourth dynasty was Khufu, better known as Cheops, whose pyramid at Gizeh is of vast size and said to contain more stone than any other single building in existence. The blocks are huge, and some of them were brought a considerable distance, the method adopted being to drag them on rollers across the ground to the river and then float them down on barges. The accuracy with which the stones have been cut and jointed, together with the way they have been transported and set in place, shows signs of extraordinary patience and not insignificant mechanical skill. Herodotus says the building of the pyramid occupied relays of 100,000 men

for twenty years, and there is no reason to doubt his statement.

The successor of Cheops was Khafra, who built the second pyramid of Gizeh, which is of inferior workmanship to the first. A fine statue of this monarch stands in the museum at Gizeh carved out of diorite—the hardest of stone.

The third pyramid at Gizeh was built by Menkaura, and is much smaller than those built by his predecessors.

It has been the custom to measure the splendour of Cheops' imagination by the size of his pyramid, but it is likely that, having no standard to measure by, he had little conception of what he was undertaking when he began it, and having once begun was ashamed to leave it unfinished. His successors profited by his experience and designed their tombs on a more moderate scale. The custom of pyramid-building continued for centuries, but no monarch attempted to rival the early work, and the pyramids dwindled in size until at last the fashion of building them died away.

Beside the great pyramids at Gizeh lies the sphinx—a colossal image, having the body of a lion and the face of a man. It is carved on a huge rock, the shape of which doubtless suggested the idea, and hollow places in the rock are filled with masonry. A stela found near the sphinx mentions the name of Khafra, but some writers have thought it is a forgery of the time of Psamatik.

The Pharaohs of the fifth dynasty are said to have been usurpers of priestly origin, and to have shown much favour to religious institutions. They were enterprising, working the mines in the Sinaitic peninsula, and trading down the coasts of the Red

Sea. They also raided the south, carrying their arms as far as Wady Halfa and the second cataract in search of slaves and booty. One of the oldest known papyri, "The Prisse," is a copy of a work written in the reign of Dadkara, one of the later kings of this dynasty. It is entitled "The Proverbs of Ptahhetep," and the author was uncle and tutor to the king.

The monarchs of the sixth dynasty were yet more warlike and enterprising, inscriptions of its kings in all parts of Egypt testifying to their activity. Memphis had hitherto been the capital city, but these monarchs, pushing their conquests southward, preferred to reside at Elephantiné near the first cataract.

Teta, the founder of the dynasty, built a pyramid at Sakkara, inside which are inscriptions of the very greatest importance.

Pepy I., the third king of the dynasty, reigned long, and has left many memorials. He had the south so well under control that he could levy regiments of Soudanese to help him against the Bedouin of the Sinaitic peninsula. An interesting historical inscription belongs to his reign—the biography of Una, the prime minister. Beginning his career under Teta he rose from post to post, becoming secretary to Pepy I., and at length commander of an expedition against the Bedouin. In this capacity he raided the country of the king's enemies five times, cutting down the vines and fig-trees of the wretched people, slaughtering many and bringing back hosts of slaves.

On a tomb at Assouan there is a valuable biographical inscription of the reigns of Merenra and Pepy II., the fourth and fifth kings of the

dynasty. The inscription is in glorification of Herkhuf, successor to Una, and it tells of raids into the Soudan from which the Egyptians returned laden with spoil. Notwithstanding the bombastic language used in these inscriptions, they give the impression that the civilisation of that time was of a rudimentary character, and that the Egyptians after all were but a simple-minded folk.

During the reign of Pepy II. Egypt prospered, but after his death rivals strove for the throne and the dynasty had not a peaceful end. Herodotus says that one of the later kings was slain by conspirators, his queen Nitocris remaining on the throne. Determined on vengeance she built a subterranean banqueting hall connected by a secret conduit with the river, and having invited those implicated to a feast, she let in the river and drowned them all.

After the sixth dynasty there is a period of historical uncertainty—the country having evidently fallen upon troublous times. The central administration was weak, and the seat of government, which had returned from Elephantiné to Memphis, was driven southward to Heracleopolis, from which city the Pharaohs of the ninth and tenth dynasties governed such part of the country as remained loyal.

CHAPTER III

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM—DYNASTIES XII.-XIV.

DURING the period of confusion above described, when the Pharaohs had been driven southward

and had enough to do to hold their own in Heracleopolis, the feudal princes, each governing his province, were practically independent and founded quasi-royal dynasties in their various cities. The weakening of the central power left the country at the mercy of its neighbours, and the Libyan desert tribes began to cluster round, squatting on the hill slopes and encroaching on the fertile lands of the Nile Valley wherever they got the chance.

The country being thus disorganised opportunity was given for some new dynasty to seize the reins of government. Now it happened that, whilst the rest of the country was weak, Thebes was gaining in strength. This city was so far south that it was not much affected by troubles in Northern Egypt, but yet occupied a commanding position. Being at this time under the rule of a powerful family, it revolted, and, the adjacent provinces joining the rebellion, Thebes triumphed and brought all Egypt under its sway.

The eleventh dynasty was the first that made Thebes its capital, and was partly contemporaneous with the tenth which had ruled at Heracleopolis. During this period there was a revival of the commercial spirit—ships were built, roads made, and trade routes established.

An inscription in the Valley of Hammamat, the ancient route from Koptos to the Red Sea, tells of an expedition undertaken to the land of Punt, the name given to the country round the south end of the Sea. The expedition was for commercial purposes and brought back many products.

The eleventh dynasty was of service to Egypt,

but towards its close the feudal chiefs again became too strong for the central power, and a firmer hand was needed if the Pharaoh was to be supreme. The kings of the twelfth dynasty proved equal to the occasion.

DYNASTY XII.—*Amenemhat I., Usertesen I., Amenemhat II., Usertesen II., Usertesen III., Amenemhat III., Amenemhat IV., Sebekneferu.*

The second Theban and twelfth Egyptian dynasty was of high importance. Its founder Amenemhat I. was not of royal descent, but proved an excellent ruler, restoring cities and temples, repressing crime, fixing the boundaries of the nomes, and readjusting taxation. Finding Thebes to be inconveniently situated, he built a royal residence for himself farther north at Dahshur, near Memphis. His vigorous administration raised up enemies, and as a precaution he allied his son with him in the sovereignty. This son, Usertesen I., was a warrior and was fighting the Libyan tribes when his father died. To guard against usurpation he left the camp secretly and hastened home, but the fact that he had been allied with his father prevented any complication.

There is a papyrus extant relating the adventures of Sanehat, a contemporary of Usertesen I., who was in the camp when the news of Amenemhat's death came. Having been mixed up in a plot against the king and fearing that he might be put to death, he fled to Syria, where he passed several years, but was eventually permitted to return to Egypt, and had leisure to write an autobiography.

There was peace between Egypt and Asia at this time, and merchants could travel in safety, so that trade developed. The better to secure the country against Bedouin raids, a line of forts was built across the isthmus of Suez, the northern frontier of Egypt. In the south there were repeated campaigns against the native tribes and the country was brought under administration as far as Wady Halfa, where Amenemhat III. erected forts, and fixed a Nilometer in order that his officers might watch the state of the river. The country south of Wady Halfa, comprising the districts stretching to Dongola, perhaps to Berber, and called Cush, was raided unscrupulously by the kings of this dynasty, particularly by Usertesen III., who harried and plundered the natives without mercy. Nevertheless, Egypt herself prospered under the dynasty, and was content.

Amenemhat III. was famous for engineering works carried out at Lake Moeris in the province of the Fayum. There is a hollow here into which water passes from the Nile, thus creating an oasis, and Amenemhat I. had brought some of the surrounding country under cultivation. Amenemhat III. went further, adding about 20,000 acres to the fertile land of the oasis.

Under the twelfth dynasty therefore Egypt flourished. There seems also to have been substantial advancement at this time in architecture, sculpture and literature. A hymn written in praise of Usertesen III. is a good example of Egyptian poetry. A few lines will suffice to show its character:—

He has come, he has ruled Egypt,
He has placed the desert in his power.
He has come, he has trampled on the nations,
He has smitten the Anu, who knew not his terror.
He has come, we bring up our children,
We bury the aged by his good favour.

The kings of the twelfth dynasty had for a time abandoned Thebes, fixing their residence nearer the Delta, but conquest and extension of frontier towards the south revived the importance of the southern city; and, when the twelfth dynasty failed, the sceptre again fell into the hands of the Theban lords, and Thebes became the capital of Egypt once more.

Little is known of the thirteenth dynasty, but Egypt seems to have been fairly prosperous under it, and some of its sovereigns must have ruled over the whole land, for one has left statues of himself at Tanis and Bubastis in the Delta, as well as at Thebes. During this dynasty the Hyksos invasion began, and its later kings must have had a constant struggle with the foreign enemy.

If the thirteenth dynasty is obscure, the fourteenth is yet more shadowy. Their seat of government was at Xois, in the Western Delta —the Eastern being under the government of the Hyksos. How the power of the native kings shifted from Thebes to Xois we do not know; but the Hyksos had gained the supremacy, and Xois was perhaps the last stronghold of the native administration. Professor Flinders Petrie thinks that the so-called kings of the fourteenth dynasty were "merely the puppets of the Hyksos power—the heads of the native administration which was maintained for taxing purposes."

CHAPTER IV

THE HYKSOS

We come now to a period during which Egypt was under the power of Asiatics who invaded the country in overwhelming numbers, and settled in the Delta, ruling Egypt for several centuries before they were driven out by the kings of the seventeenth and eighteenth dynasties.

Professor Sayce has suggested that these invaders, who were known as the Hyksos, came from Elam, and were of the same race as those who descended upon Babylonia and founded a dynasty there, the same movement perhaps sending some into Babylonia and others into Egypt. Or, since experience has shown that one racial migration has generally caused others, it may be that the tribes dwelling in Syria and Northern Arabia, pressed hard by the Babylonians, who were themselves pressed by the Elamites, became invaders in their turn, and, encouraged by the feebleness of the Egyptian government of that time, swept down like locusts upon the tempting valley of the Nile. The Eastern Delta was soon conquered, but the Thebans fought vigorously, and a stand may also have been made in the Western Delta for a time. At last all yielded, and Salatis, the leader of the Asiatics, was recognised as king. After the first severities of the invasion, the Hyksos fell in with the habits of the people, governed through the old agencies in great part, and respected religious prejudices. Zoan was chosen as their capital, and farther

east, at Avaris, a huge, fortified camp was constructed which served the double purpose of protecting their eastern frontier and training troops for keeping Egypt in subjection. The Hyksos doubtless overran the whole country, for traces of them have been found south of Thebes, but their influence was probably more directly felt in Lower Egypt, and so long as the inhabitants of the upper provinces were submissive and paid tribute regularly they were left in the enjoyment of much local freedom.

The Hyksos' period has a special interest, because during it the Hebrews appear upon the scene. Early in the period it seems likely that Abraham visited Egypt. The court was at Zoan, and therefore quite accessible from the Syrian side, and the fact that the rulers were Asiatics, and perhaps of the same race as Abraham, accounts for their friendly reception of him. Some generations afterwards, when Joseph was brought as a slave to Egypt, the Hyksos still ruled, and the Pharaoh who showed him so much kindness must have been one of the later kings of their dynasty. The land of Goshen, in which Joseph's brethren were permitted to settle, was south of Zoan, at the mouth of the valley now traversed by the railway between Ismailia and Zagazig. The statement that every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians cannot be explained by the fact that Egypt had groaned under the tyranny of shepherd kings, seeing that Joseph's patron was himself one of that dynasty. It probably means no more than that the Egyptians, being averse to pastoral occupation, left the care of the cattle to the lowest orders of the people.

Though all Egypt was under the Hyksos, their rule was most felt in the Delta, and the princes of Thebes never quite lost their independence. Gradually, therefore, the patriotic party rallied round them, and revolt began.

The expulsion of the alien rulers was finally accomplished by the first king of the eighteenth dynasty, but the kings of the seventeenth have the credit of beginning the struggle. These kings appear to have had dark blood in their veins, and may have descended from some branch of the ancient royal family that had taken refuge in the south to escape from the invaders. The seventeenth dynasty was contemporaneous with the Hyksos, the revolt spreading slowly from the south into Upper Egypt, then into Lower Egypt, and finally into the Delta. So slow indeed was the process of expulsion that it must have been owing as much to the natural decay of the Hyksos power as to the valour of the Egyptians.

The story of the final effort is told by an Egyptian officer named Ahmes, from whose autobiography we learn that Ahmes I., the founder of the eighteenth dynasty, defeated the Hyksos army in battle, captured their last stronghold in Egypt and chased them over the frontier even into Canaan. One or two efforts were made by the Hyksos to recover their position, but they were soon crushed out. But, although their army had been expelled, the invading race could not now be rooted out of Egypt; for, during the centuries which had passed, there had been much intermarrying with the earlier inhabitants, and the permanent influence of the Asiatics upon the country must have been considerable.

CHAPTER V

AN ASIATIC EMPIRE

DYNASTY XVIII.—*Ahmes, Amenhotep I., Thothmes I., Thothmes II., Hatsheput, Thothmes III., Amenhotep II., Thothmes IV., Amenhotep III., Akhenaten, Rasmenkhka, Tutankh-Amen, Ai, Horemheb.*

THOUGH the Hyksos had been expelled and the government was again in the hands of a native dynasty, many foreigners remained in Egypt. Where these dwelt in accessible districts they were conquered and became serfs, but in the less accessible parts of the Delta, amongst the jungles and marshes, some tribes maintained a precarious independence. The presence of the Hyksos in Egypt had attracted others of Semitic race, amongst whom were the Hebrews who had settled in Goshen and were at first well treated, but eventually fell into serfdom like the rest.

When opposition ceased in the Delta, Ahmes I. turned his arms southward against the Soudanese and subdued them although not without difficulty. After this Egypt enjoyed a period of repose, and there was a revival of building activity from which Thebes especially profited. When Ahmes had reigned for twenty-five years he died, and having done so well for his country was worshipped for several centuries as a god.

Amenhotep I. succeeded him, and then Thothmes I. came to the throne, under whom Egypt made a new departure in foreign affairs. Beyond short excursions for the sake of chastising the Bedouin, the Pharaohs had taken little interest

in Asia until the Hyksos thrust it severely upon their notice. But Thothmes I., perhaps with some idea of avenging the long period of Egyptian humiliation, determined to carry his arms into that continent. The time was favourable for conquest, for the great powers which afterwards dominated Western Asia had not yet put forth their strength, and Thothmes I. had only to deal with loose tribal confederacies. The long struggle with the Hyksos and with the frontier tribes, had inured the Egyptians to warfare, and the expedition was successful, Thothmes raiding as far as the Euphrates, and returning to Thebes with much booty. After this the Pharaohs sent pillaging expeditions into Asia more or less frequently for hundreds of years until the great Asiatic kingdoms arose and the tide of conquest turned.

When Thothmes I. died, Hatshepsut, his eldest daughter, succeeded as colleague of her younger brother, Thothmes II. The queen was a woman of strong character and took full control of affairs, and when her brother died after a short reign, she nominated a half-brother as Thothmes III., continuing to rule as co-regent until he became old enough to rule by himself. Hatshepsut abstained from war and did Egypt excellent service, developing the resources of the country and reopening the mines in the Sinaitic peninsula, which had not been worked for centuries. She fitted out a fleet in the Red Sea, and sent it on a commercial expedition to Punt, where it was well received, and from which it brought back precious commodities. To commemorate this expedition the queen built a temple at Thebes, decorating the

walls with frescoes, illustrative of its exploits. After her death Thothmes III. assumed full sovereignty and showed himself to be a most vigorous king. Hatshepsut had been averse to war, and much that Thothmes I. had gained in Syria had been lost. Thothmes III. determined to make the power of Egypt again felt, and marching into Asia routed the Syrians at Megiddo. Having been so successful in his first expedition he made many others, proving himself a courageous and capable leader. He was not content with reaching the Euphrates, but crossed it, and penetrating into Mesopotamia, so overawed the Assyrians and Babylonians that they bought him off with gifts. The influence of Thothmes III. extended to Cyprus, the Isles of the Ægean, Phœnicia and Asia Minor, and for a time Egypt was supreme from the Taurus to Abyssinia. Of course Thothmes did not interfere with local affairs. The provinces governed themselves and fought amongst themselves as they liked, and so long as they paid tribute regularly Pharaoh was satisfied. These conquests brought Egypt into closer contact with the Asiatic world, and she learned many things. Having been so largely devoted to agriculture, the Egyptians had not made that progress in manufacture which might have been expected, and had much to learn from other nations. The gorgeous garments and elegant ornaments brought as spoil from Asia, inspired them with a desire to imitate, and their captives taught them the way. After this time also there was more intermarrying with Syria, and a considerable increase of Semitic influence at the court of Pharaoh.

Attention has been drawn by historians to the fact that at this time Egypt, although herself so largely agricultural, was importing food stuffs from abroad. This proves that a considerable section of the population must have been engaged at other than agricultural work, chiefly, doubtless, on building operations. Amongst those so engaged were the Hebrews, who had now been in Egypt several centuries, and had developed from a family into a people.

Thothmes III. reigned for fifty-four years, and left behind him a high reputation as a conqueror. Amongst his monuments are two obelisks, one of which is now in New York, the other in London.

Amenhotep II. succeeded, and after him Thothmes IV., who cleared the sand away from the sphinx, and set up a tablet between its paws.

Amenhotep III., next ascended the throne, and reigned for thirty-one years. The supremacy of Egypt was now so widely recognised that he had few foreign wars, and the numerous tombs, tablets and buildings erected during this period show it to have been one of peaceful progress. Two of Amenhotep's statues remain — the twin Colossi, of hugh size and impressive appearance. One of the statues was called the vocal Memnon, because after it had been thrown down by earthquake in the reign of Tiberius it emitted a crackling noise at sunrise, which passed for music. The sound was caused by the expansion of the stone and ceased when the statue was repaired. Amenhotep III. married Tyi, a princess of Northern Syria, and a worshipper of the solar disc, in honour of whose faith he built a temple.

During his life this form of sun worship made some progress in Egypt, and after his death his son Amenhotep IV., having been trained in this faith by his mother, established it as the state religion and changed his name to Akhenaten (Brilliance of the Sun), in honour of the god. Sun worship was not new in Egypt, for it had been practised at Heliopolis, nor was it so degrading as the conventional idolatry. The adoration of the sun as the channel through which the Supreme Being sustained, animated and reproduced life and power upon the earth, was founded upon a fundamental principle, although like other false religions it soon degenerated into mere idolatry.

Akhenaten found the Theban priesthood so bitterly hostile to the change of worship that he removed the seat of government from Thebes, building a new capital farther north, with a gorgeous palace, at a place now known as Tel el-Amarna. When he removed to the new city he took with him the clay tablets upon which the foreign correspondence of his father was inscribed, and to these his own correspondence was added. The new capital only held its position for thirty years, after which it was deserted and soon perished, the buildings crumbling and becoming mere mounds buried by the drifting sand. Quite recently these mounds have been explored and some hundreds of tablets have been dug up, including many dispatches from Asiatic princes and governors. The tablets throw a vivid light upon the history of the period. They prove that the language and writing of Babylonia were the common medium of official communication in

Western Asia, and were used freely by many who were not officials a century before the Exodus. They prove, moreover, that education must have been wonderfully general even at that early date. The letters from the governors of the Asiatic cities and provinces also show that whereas, during the reign of Amenhotep III., peace and loyalty prevailed in Syria, during the reign of Amenhotep IV. (Akhenaten), there was ever-increasing defection.

Akhenaten left no son, but two married daughters, whose husbands succeeded him in turn. The first remained a worshipper of the solar disc until his death, but the second returned to the old idolatry, deserted the new capital and took the name of Tutankh-Amen in honour of the Egyptian gods.

After these Ai, a usurper, governed a portion of Egypt for a time, and then Horemheb, the general of the forces, was placed on the throne, evidently with the approval of the army and the Theban priesthood. There had been many changes in Egypt, and the character of the army had materially altered. Formerly it had been feudal, the governors of the nomes rallying round the king in the hour of need, but the old nobility had largely disappeared, and the army was levied upon a basis of personal loyalty to the sovereign.

Horemheb seems to have united Egypt under his rule, but he left no child, and his death closed the eighteenth dynasty.

CHAPTER VI

THE PHARAOHS OF THE OPPRESSION

DYNASTY XIX.—*Ramses I., Seti I., Ramses II., Merenptah, Seti II., Si-Ptah.*

THE eighteenth dynasty had become very Asiatic in tone, and its Asiatic tendencies had culminated in the reign of Akhenaten, who not only changed his religion but also deserted the sacred city of Thebes, and surrounded himself both in the priesthood and administration with foreigners. After the death of Akhenaten and of his immediate successor, there was a sharp reaction, and aliens were either ejected from the country or depressed by persecution.

Egypt's hold upon Asia was now relaxing, and many of her conquests had fallen into the hands of the Hittites. It will be remembered that these are mentioned in Genesis, where we read that Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite. Since the days of Abraham the tribe had developed into a powerful confederacy—their territory lying north of Lebanon, and stretching from the Taurus Mountains on the west to the important city of Carchemish on the east. The possession of Carchemish on the Euphrates and Kadesh on the Orontes gave them much strength, and they were the lords of Upper Syria. At this time also they had an able leader, one Saplal, under whom they had centralised their forces, and were now warring against Egypt and making havoc amongst her Syrian possessions.

Horemheb, the last king of the eighteenth dynasty, had fought against the Hittites, and possibly made a treaty of peace with them. Ramses I., the founder of the nineteenth dynasty, was already old when he ascended the throne; and, though he seems to have invaded Syria and attacked Saplal, he was glad to make a treaty of peace after an indecisive campaign. The work of reconquest, therefore, fell to his son Seti I., who determined not to lose Syria without a struggle and invaded it in the beginning of his reign with a powerful army. Saplal was now dead, and the Hittites, taken by surprise, made little resistance, so that Seti returned in triumph. He had marched as far as the Orontes, and had overawed the Canaanites and the Bedouin, but his expedition was of little permanent value. For the moment, however, Egyptian prestige was increased, and provinces which had not already gone over to the enemy were kept from lapsing. Fresh conquests were out of the question, and Seti was glad to come to terms with the Hittites whose supremacy was recognised north of Lebanon whilst Egypt kept Palestine.

Seti I. was an industrious builder, evidences of his energy being found widely throughout Egypt. He built a beautiful temple at Abydos, but his greatest memorial is at Karnak where he designed and began to build an enormous temple for the worship of Amon. He was only able to begin the work and his successors carried it on from reign to reign, but for boldness of conception it is almost unparalleled, and even in ruins it amazes the beholder.

The oldest map in the world dates from the

reign of Seti I., a map of a mining district drawn on papyrus.

Ramses II. succeeded—a proud and vain-glorious man, the Louis Quatorze of Egyptian history, yet in many respects the most interesting of the Pharaohs. He lived almost one hundred years and reigned sixty-seven ; he was successful in war and was the greatest of Egyptian builders. He was the Pharaoh of the persecution, the king who ordered that the Hebrew children should be slain, and the father of the princess who saved the life of Moses. It was at his court that Moses was educated, it was from his wrath that Moses fled, nor was it until his death that Moses dared return. This has now been abundantly verified. Formerly it was thought that these events happened in the reign of Thothmes III., but it is now clear that Ramses II. was the Pharaoh of the oppression.

Though the Hittites had been defeated by Seti I., they soon recovered their strength, and Ramses determined to make an effort to regain the supremacy. Accordingly, in his fifth year, he invaded Syria, and fought a battle at Kadesh with the Hittite confederacy. After a severe struggle, in the course of which the king personally distinguished himself, the confederacy was defeated, but the Egyptians also suffered so heavily that they were glad to make peace and return to their own land. Shortly afterwards the Hittites renewed the war, and it dragged on until both Egyptians and Hittites grew tired of fighting, and entered into an offensive and defensive alliance, the treaty being signed in the city of Ramses and confirmed by a marriage between Ramses and a

daughter of the Hittite king. This definite recognition of the Hittites made a great change in the relationship of Egypt to her Asiatic dependencies, and although enterprising Pharaohs occasionally tried to recover lost ground, on the whole Egypt from this time settled down as a purely African power.

The period which followed this alliance was one of prosperity. Ramses II., though not a mighty warrior, was an able king, and did Egypt good service. Like other Oriental monarchs he spent too much upon tombs, temples and monuments, but he did not stop there. Canals were deepened, wells dug, caravan routes protected, and trade encouraged. He further advanced the extraordinary temple at Karnak which his father had begun, and he built for his treasure and for the better protection of the Delta the cities of Pithom and Ramses, the site of the former of which has been discovered.

These works were costly, and, as Ramses II. was not a great conqueror and tribute did not flow in so freely as in former reigns, money was hard to find. There was, therefore, heavy taxation and forced labour, a large section of the population being compelled to toil on public works on a mere subsistence allowance. Amongst those so treated were the Hebrews, in early times wealthy and respected landowners and cattle-dealers in Goshen, now treated as slaves, their pasture lands appropriated, their lives made bitter with hard bondage.

The long reign of Ramses II. had somewhat enfeebled the royal power, and Merenptah, his son, who succeeded him was, owing to his father's

great age, himself past the prime of life when he came to the throne. "Thus one old man succeeded another at a moment when Egypt must have needed more than ever an active and vigorous ruler." Scarcely was Merenptah seated on the throne when trouble began. The Libyan tribes on the north-west frontier, living a half-starved, desert life, who had long looked with envy on the fertile valley of the Nile, now determined to invade Egypt, and gathering their possessions together advanced upon the western side of the Delta. Their first attacks were successful, the frontier towns were destroyed and the open country ravaged. Merenptah, taken by surprise, remained within the fortifications of Memphis until an army was raised which defeated and scattered the tribes. The king has been accused of cowardice because he did not lead his army in person, but as he was over sixty years of age, this is not to be wondered at.

He had a brief reign, but was on the whole a successful king, apparently preserving the empire intact, so far as it had been handed down to him.

After his death the monarchy rapidly decayed. Seti II., his son, was a weak prince, and there was rebellion during his reign. Amon-messu either disputed the throne with him or seized it at his death, governing at Thebes in defiance of the lawful sovereign who was reigning in the north. Seti was succeeded by Si-Ptah, who reigned for six years, and with him the nineteenth dynasty came to an end.

It was during this dynasty that the Exodus of the Children of Israel took place. There has been much discussion as to the reign in which

the event happened, Merenptah, Seti II. and Si-Ptah having their respective advocates. It is almost certain, however, that it was during the reign of Merenptah, in which the Egyptian legend of the Exodus places it. A stela discovered at Thebes by Professor Flinders Petrie in 1896 confirms this. Merenptah probably reigned between 1208 and 1187, so that although we do not know the exact year of the Exodus the date has now been brought within reasonable limits.

The plagues, by means of which Pharaoh was influenced, and which culminated in the death of the first-born, probably lasted for some months, but at last the Hebrews were allowed to depart. Even then Pharaoh's fickleness of purpose induced him to pursue, with the result that he lost part of his army in the lakes which lie north of the Red Sea.

The Exodus was well timed. Just a few years before, Palestine had been an Egyptian province, and at that time the Hebrews would have been still within the grasp of Egypt even after they had entered Asia, but Egypt had now lost her grip and Palestine was no longer tributary. The Hebrews did not at once enter the land of promise, for when they reached its southern frontier their unfitness for the immediate conquest of the country became so evident that the event was delayed for a generation. During this time they dwelt in the mountains of Seir, but, at last, when the timid rabble which had left Egypt had given place to a new and hardy generation, they crossed the Jordan and entered the promised land.

Meanwhile things had been going badly in Egypt, and the central government had broken down. The governors of the various provinces ceased to acknowledge any superior, and warred amongst themselves. In the words of a papyrus, "there was no master, and for a time the country belonged to the governors of cities, one massacring another." Emboldened by these internal divisions, Arisu, a Phœnician prince, invaded Egypt, seized the throne, and proceeded to conquer the country province by province. The days of the empire seemed numbered, the direct line of Ramses II. was extinct, and the country whose conquests had extended to Mesopotamia was now struggling for existence.

CHAPTER VII

A DECLINING POWER

EGYPT'S brilliant period seemed now to have passed away. Three centuries before, she had set out on a career of conquest, and Thothmes III. had raised her to a climax of imperial grandeur, but his conquests had been lost, and both at home and abroad she was surrounded by difficulties. At home the nineteenth dynasty had ended ingloriously—a Syrian prince was on the throne of the Pharaohs, the leading Egyptian nobles were banished, everywhere there was confusion and civil war. For the loss of their foreign possessions the Pharaohs were not entirely responsible. In the earlier days there had been no Asiatic power capable of holding its own against

Egypt, but this was no longer the case. The Hittites had become powerful, and Assyria was making her influence felt, and although the Hittite empire faded and the Assyrian went under a cloud, the empire of David and Solomon took their place and effectually barred the door of Asia against Egypt. Her career had been distinguished, and she was yet destined to enjoy much prosperity, but her chance of world-wide empire had passed away.

For a time the country was enabled to escape the indignity of prolonged foreign domination, her deliverer arising from that Theban race to which she already owed so much. Setnekht, a Theban prince, began the war of independence, and after hard fighting drove Arisu, the Phœnician, from power and recovered Egypt for the Egyptians. In fighting for Egyptian freedom Setnekht fought his own way to the throne, and, being already an old man, he associated his son, Ramses III., with himself in the government.

Ramses III. was a distinguished monarch, who reigned for thirty years, and did his country good service. When he ascended the throne Egypt was in anything but a healthy condition, for the years of anarchy had wrought great evil. "The people lived in banishment abroad. The land belonged to princes from foreign parts. They slew one another, whether noble or mean."

Ramses restored order at home and abroad. His first foreign trouble was with the Libyans. Since their last invasion of Egypt, in the reign of Merenptah, they had been growing in strength, pressing more and more on the Delta and seizing fertile land wherever they could. So formidable

had they become that Ramses dared not attack them without much preparation. His army was weak, the old warlike spirit had died out from amongst the Egyptians, and for both army and navy he had to depend greatly upon mercenaries. Accordingly he determined to reorganise the military service, and it was well that he did, for in the fifth year of his reign the tribes of the western desert poured in great force into the Delta. Ramses, however, was ready for them, and a battle was fought in which they were defeated with terrible slaughter.

In his eighth year Ramses III. had to deal with a vast tribal movement from Asia Minor and the islands of the Mediterranean. Possibly the movement had begun beyond the Balkans, the northern tribes making one of those migrations to the south which have played so important a part in history, pressing the southern tribes before them as waves of the sea are pressed before a mighty wind. The tribes coming by land brought with them their women, children and household gods, a vast, undisciplined array, and to support them there sailed a formidable fleet. Ramses concentrated an army beyond the frontier and completely defeated the land forces of the enemy, and then assembling a fleet at the mouth of the Nile, and apparently enticing the enemy into a lagoon, he encircled and destroyed them, thus almost annihilating their forces both by land and sea.

In his eleventh year the African tribes again crossed the western frontier, but were heavily defeated, and so discouraged that they broke up their confederacy. They now abandoned their

efforts against Egypt, and became once more the scattered tribes from amongst whom the Pharaohs recruited their army and fleet.

Egypt had now rest from foreign foes, and Ramses III. was able to attend to the development of her resources. The mines in the Sinaitic peninsula were again worked, and an Egyptian fleet trafficked on the Red Sea. Cities and temples were restored, and a palace of very elaborate design was built. During Ramses' reign Egypt prospered, and he must be reckoned one of the great Pharaohs.

Kings of the same name followed, occupying the throne for a century and a half, but their reigns were undistinguished. The character of the Egyptians had degenerated. The rulers preferred the luxury of the palace to the task of government. The old nobility had disappeared, the poor spent their lives at forced labour, and were so wretchedly paid that, although little better than slaves, they had the spirit to hold indignation meetings, and even to strike. Our sympathy is the more aroused when we find that the demand of the strikers was for bread, and that much of their misery arose from the theft of their rations by officials.

There was apparently no lack of money in Egypt had it been distributed with any degree of fairness. Much tribute and spoil had flowed into the country and little had gone out, so that there was abundance of precious metal, and the passion of the time was for jewellery and gorgeous furniture. But far too great a proportion of the wealth had passed into the hands of the aristocracy, and especially into the hands of the priests. The

position of the priests had always been an important one in Egypt, and from early times much of the land had belonged to them. The chief temples were at Heliopolis, Memphis and Thebes, and the High Priest of Thebes, or, as he was termed, "the first prophet of Amon," took rank after the king. Formerly it had been the duty of the king to nominate this high functionary, and care had been taken to choose a loyal supporter, or even a member of the royal house. But in the reign of Ramses III. the high priest nominated his own son as successor, and after that the office was treated as hereditary. Thus it came to pass that one dynasty of kings, and another of powerful and wealthy priests, ran parallel in Egypt. The kings, content with lives of pleasure, gradually allowed the high priests to usurp the duties of government, and when at last, with the death of Ramses XIII., the twentieth dynasty came to an end, Her-Hor, the High Priest of Amon, ascended the throne, Thebes and Southern Egypt acquiescing in his succession.

Her-Hor, the founder of the dynasty of priest kings, the twenty-first Egyptian dynasty, was a powerful man who had already held important offices of state, so that the transition was easy. But the change did not command universal approval, for, though the direct royal line had become extinct, collateral branches of the family were to be found, and whilst the priest kings were governing Southern Egypt, the Delta was ruled by rivals who held their court at Tanis and claimed royal descent. This division of the country into two Egypts, a division which is believed to have existed in the earliest times,

was now destined to have some permanence. Theban, or Southern Egypt, tended to become more African in its character, whilst Northern Egypt, keeping in touch with Europe and Asia, became more cosmopolitan. The immediate result of the division was, however, civil war and a political feebleness which lasted for a century. Nor was Egypt at this time in a better condition socially than politically. From the reign of Ramses III. until the end of the priest dynasty, a period of two and a half centuries, there is little worthy of record. Architecture retrograded, literature made no progress, and the nation steadily degenerated in moral tone, violence abounding, and robbery becoming a profession. It had long been the custom to bury wealthy Egyptians with ornaments and jewels, and corporations of thieves were formed for pillaging the cemeteries. The tombs of kings and of the rich were plundered, and with so much secrecy that the thefts were sometimes not discovered for years. Occasionally the law made a show of interfering, but officials were easily bribed, and for the most part crime went unpunished.

Whilst Egypt was thus decaying other countries advanced. During the twentieth dynasty Assyria had seemed likely to take the foremost place, but her power declined for a time, and the kingdom founded by Saul, and raised to greatness by David and Solomon, became supreme in Syria. The Exodus had taken place towards the end of the nineteenth dynasty, and the conquest of Canaan by the Hebrews occurred during the reign of Ramses III. The period of Egyptian depression was therefore coeval with that of Judges, and

whilst the government of Egypt was thus distracted and divided between dynasties ruling at Tanis and Thebes, David built up the Hebrew empire, extending from the Red Sea to the Euphrates. David kept on friendly terms with Egypt, and Solomon married an Egyptian princess, the daughter of one of the last of the Pharoahs of the Tanite dynasty. Friendship between the peoples led to extended commerce, but the Hebrews gained little by it in morality.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GRAPPLE WITH ASSYRIA

NOTHING is more striking in connection with Egyptian history than the way in which the seat of government shifted from place to place. In most countries the capital city is fixed even when the dynasty changes, but in Egypt it often shifted with the dynasty, and This, Memphis, Elephantiné, Heracleopolis, Thebes, Xois, Tanis, Bubastis, and Sais, each in turn aspired to metropolitan dignity.

During the period covered by the twenty-first dynasty kings had been reigning both at Tanis and Thebes, but both dynasties had decayed, and there was need in Egypt for a strong man if the country was to be reunited. The strong man came in the person of Shishak, the founder of the twenty-second dynasty. Shishak was captain of the Libyan mercenaries, and these, becoming

powerful in Egypt, at last rose against their employers and set their own chief upon the throne.

Shishak proved to be an energetic and warlike sovereign, and when he had restored order throughout Egypt he began to look towards Syria with longing eyes. Solomon still reigned, and the united Hebrew kingdom was too strong for Shishak to attack, but he watched the Jewish king's waning popularity with satisfaction, and did his best to foment rebellion. When Jeroboam conspired and had to fly, he found a welcome at the court of Shishah, and on Solomon's death, the refugee returning home, proved a ready instrument by which the Hebrew kingdom might be rent in twain.

In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak led his forces against Judæa, and Rehoboam was overawed and made little resistance, so that Jerusalem was captured, and the temple and palace were spoiled of the treasures which had been gathered in such abundance by Solomon. In the record at Karnak of this campaign there occur the names of many captured cities, and of these some were Israelitish, so that it looks as if the raid were directed against both Hebrew kingdoms, and not specially against Judah.

After Shishak several kings reigned at Bubastis, but they were men of an inferior type, and we know little of their achievements. When Egypt had been suzerain of Judæa for thirty years Asa rebelled, and defeated a huge army sent against him so completely that the astonished Egyptians ceased to dream of Asiatic empire.

The Bubastite dynasty was followed by the twenty-third dynasty, the kings of which ruled

from Tanis, but their history is quite obscure. They were succeeded by the kings of the twenty-fourth dynasty, who ruled at Sais.

During this period of weakness the country south of Egypt known as Ethiopia, and in modern times as the Soudan, was prospering. There was much affinity between Egypt and Ethiopia in language, customs and religion, but for many centuries Egypt had been supreme. Profiting by the weakness of her suzerain, Ethiopia had of late recovered her independence, and was now under the rule of Piankhi, whose capital city was Napata. Piankhi advanced as far as Memphis, and was victorious, but was not strong enough to consolidate his power in Lower Egypt and retired to Napata, leaving the native kings ruling in Sais. Some years after another Ethiopian king arose named Shabak, who, being made of sterner stuff, reconquered Egypt, captured Bocchoris, the Egyptian king, and is said to have burned him to death.

Whilst Ethiopia was thus in the ascendant, Assyria overshadowed Western Asia, and only the now feeble kingdoms of Israel and Judah lay between Egypt and this formidable power. On the death of Tiglath-Pileser III. (Pul), the subject peoples had revolted, the Israelites amongst the rest, and Samaria was besieged by Shalmaneser IV. That king did not live to complete the conquest, but Sargon, his successor, took the city by storm and carried Israel away captive to Assyria.

Two years later Sargon was again in the west, and, marching past Judah, he attacked Gaza, a city of Philistia. Hanun, the king of Gaza,

besought Egypt for help, and the Egyptian king Bocchoris sent an army under Shabe, one of his generals, to his relief. Sargon encountered the allies at Raphia, Assyria and Egypt thus meeting for the first time. The Assyrians were completely victorious—Hanun was taken prisoner, Shabe barely escaped with his life.

Sometime afterwards, Sargon having been assassinated and his son Sennacherib being on the throne, Western Asia made another struggle for freedom. Amongst the rest, Hezekiah, king of Judah, revolted, and the aid of Egypt was sought. Shabatok was now reigning, and, when Sennacherib invaded Judæa, the Egyptians marched to help the Jewish king, but were completely defeated at Eltekeh and retired within their own borders. Sennacherib marched throughout Judah plundering and destroying, but Hezekiah held out in Jerusalem under circumstances which the Bible has made familiar to us, and Sennacherib's army at last met with the great disaster which necessitated his return to Assyria.

Sennacherib did not again attack either Judah or Egypt, but with the accession of Esarhaddon, his son, there was a change of policy. Tirhakah reigned in Egypt, and Judah was governed by Manasseh, an unpopular and irreligious king, when Esarhaddon determined to perfect the conquest which his father had begun. Accordingly he marched west with a great army, and having easily defeated Manasseh, descended upon Egypt. Tirhakah made an obstinate defence, but was at last driven southward until he took refuge in Ethiopia, Esarhaddon reaching Thebes. The Assyrian king completely reorganised the Egyptian

government, placing in each of the twenty provinces into which the country was divided a viceroy with an Assyrian garrison.

After Esarhaddon had returned to Nineveh, things went well enough for a time; but Tirhakah's party again got the ascendency, and Thebes sympathising, Memphis was captured and the invaders were driven out. Esarhaddon set out to suppress the revolt, but died on the way, and was succeeded by his son Assur-bani-pal.

The new king was as warlike as his father, and Tirhakah, defeated in the Delta, again fled to Napata. The viceroys were reappointed, and Assur-bani-pal returned to Nineveh in triumph. But scarcely had he reached Assyria when he heard that the viceroys were plotting with Tirhakah, and planning a fresh rebellion. The prime leader in the revolt was Necho, the prince of Sais, the ablest of the viceroys, and he was captured and sent in chains to Nineveh. Assur-bani-pal now tried a new plan. Recognising Necho's ability, he sent him back as his chief representative, with Assyrian troops to support him, and at the same time gave a principality to his son Psamatik. Tirhakah was unable to withstand these princes, and retired to Ethiopia, where he died. Shortly after his death his successor, Tuant-Amon, made a further attempt, and, Thebes having opened her gates to receive him, he marched upon Memphis. The city was taken, Necho was slain, Psamatik fled, and Ethiopia was again supreme.

Assur-bani-pal now made a determined effort. Invading Egypt in person, he defeated Tuant-

Amon, chased him to Thebes, and from Thebes to Ethiopia. Thebes was terribly punished for its rebellious tendencies. Its temples, monuments and palaces were destroyed, its treasure carried to Nineveh, its people led away captive. The destruction of this ancient city made a profound impression on the world, and is referred to by Nahum, the prophet, who threatens Nineveh herself with a similar fate. "Art thou better than No-Amon (Thebes), that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about her; whose rampart was the Nile, and her wall was of the Nile? Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers. Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains."

This long period of fighting, both with Ethiopia and Assyria, had told terribly upon Egypt. The fertile valley of the Nile, only a few miles wide, was trodden under foot again and again by fiercely-contesting armies. The cities had been destroyed, the temples plundered, the monuments broken in pieces. The glory had apparently departed. National records ceased, and the history of the period has to be searched for amongst the writings of the Greeks. Assyria had triumphed, and it seemed as if Egypt must now content herself with being a fief of that empire. Yet at this moment of deepest depression forces were at work which were destined to crush Assyria, and give to Egypt a new lease of life.

CHAPTER IX

RESTORATION

HAVING once more crushed the Ethiopian invader, and re-established the viceregal system in Egypt, the Assyrians withdrew from the country, and, as it happened, were never again able to meddle with its affairs. The mighty empire which had so long overridden Western Asia was now herself on the brink of ruin. First she had to deal with a war in Elam, and then with revolts in Babylonia, Arabia and Lydia. Scarcely had she emerged exhausted from these troubles when she was trodden under foot by the Scythians, who poured into Asia at this time, and spread over almost her whole empire. Finally, when still breathless from this invasion, she was attacked by the Medes and Babylonians, and succumbed.

During the early part of this period, whilst Assyria was still grappling with her revolted provinces at home, Egypt was left to herself, and her viceroys were practically independent princes. Amongst these the most capable was Psamatik, the prince of Sais, son of that Necho who had been promoted to high honour by Assur-banipal, and afterwards slain by Tuant-Amon the Ethiopian. Aware of the difficulties by which his suzerain was surrounded, Psamatik determined to restore Egyptian independence, and to endeavour to reunite the country under his own rule. Being himself apparently of foreign descent, he had not the Egyptian prejudice against foreigners, and is said to have made

alliance with Gyges, king of Lydia, who sent him Greek mercenaries. With the aid of the Greeks he expelled such Assyrian garrisons as had not already been withdrawn, and having triumphed over the other princes, at length gained sovereignty over the whole of Egypt.

Psamatik proved an excellent sovereign, and under his rule the country revived. He restored canals and roads, rebuilt cities and temples, and brought the devastated lands once more under cultivation. Egypt had suffered grievously, the more influential cities had been sacked and burnt, the less important had suffered in their degree. Much restoration was necessary, and under Psamatik the valley of the Nile became "one huge workshop," so that the country began to lift up her head.

Under this dynasty, the twenty-sixth, a salutary change came over Egypt with regard to her treatment of foreigners. Egyptians had been extremely exclusive, but Psamatik, knowing that by foreigners he had won and was holding his crown, invited the Greeks to settle in Egypt, and encouraged commerce between Egypt and the Mediterranean ports. It was during his reign that the Scythian invasion of which we have spoken took place, and their van even reached the Egyptian frontier, but the king prudently bribed them to retrace their steps.

As Assyria was now helpless, Psamatik made some effort to restore to Egypt her ancient Asiatic empire. He invaded Philistia and besieged Ashdod, but the siege was very tedious, lasting for thirteen years. At last the city fell, and was occupied by an Egyptian garrison, but Psamatik's

experiences at Ashdod did not encourage him to advance farther into Syria.

Necho II. succeeded his father, and during his reign final destruction overtook Nineveh. A treaty was made between Cyaxares, the Mede, and Nabopolassar of Babylon, the object of which was the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire. Necho determined to share in the plunder, and attacked Assyria on the west, while the others besieged the capital. He had a well-equipped army and fleet, and the latter gave his soldiers valuable support during the wearisome desert journey between Egypt and Palestine. When at length he turned to march inland, it was necessary that he should cross Judæan territory, and Josiah, king of Judah, prepared to oppose him. Necho protested, saying, "My war is upon Euphrates," but Josiah gave him battle at Megiddo, in the plain of Esdraleon, east of Carmel, and was defeated and slain.

After Megiddo, Necho marched on the Euphrates and captured Carchemish. On his return journey he captured Jerusalem and deposed Jehoahaz, the new king, making Jehoiakim king in his stead. Thus in one campaign Necho had apparently revived Egypt's Asiatic glory, having added Palestine and much of Syria to his dominions. But the triumph was short-lived. Nineveh fell, and the spoils were divided—Cyaxares seizing Northern Assyria and Nabopolassar, taking Babylon and the Euphrates Valley. Necho still held Syria, but was attacked almost at once by Nebuchadrezzar, the warlike son of Nabopolassar, and driven headlong from Carchemish back to his own country.

Necho thus rudely awakened from his dreams of empire resolved to devote himself to home affairs. In these he showed enterprise and ability. In an endeavour to find a means of transporting ships from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea he partially restored the canal which had been made in former ages connecting the Red Sea with the Nile, but superstition apparently interfered with the completion of the work. He next fitted out a fleet, and engaged Phœnician sailors to explore the African coast and see whether Africa was circumnavigable. The fleet sailed down the Red Sea into the Southern Ocean, and in the third year returned by way of the Straits of Gibraltar to Egypt. As the sailors had not only to land nightly, but also to lay up their ships, sow grain and wait for harvest when they ran short of provisions, their perseverance was unparalleled, and the voyage is one of the most wonderful in history. The stories brought home by the sailors about a reversal in the sun's course, which were received by their countrymen with incredulity, are now known to prove that they accomplished the feat.

Psamatik II., who succeeded Necho II., had a reputation for wisdom which travelled beyond Egypt, for an embassy came from Greece to consult him concerning the rules of the Olympic games.

About this time Zedekiah was king of Judah, having been placed on the throne by Nebuchadrezzar. He remained loyal to his suzerain for nine years, but at length revolted, and Jerusalem was besieged by a Babylonian army. Psamatik II. was dead, and his son Apries, the Pharaoh Hophra

of Scripture, sent an army to help the Jewish king. For the moment it was successful, for the Babylonians raised the siege of Jerusalem and retired, whilst the Egyptians captured Gaza and penetrated to Phœnicia. But these were barren victories. The Babylonians returned with irresistible force, Jerusalem was captured and destroyed, the people carried into captivity, the kingdom brought to an end, and the king carried blinded to Babylon. Gedaliah was made governor of Judah, but was murdered, and the Jews fled to Egypt and settled at Tahpanhes in the Eastern Delta.

In Egypt itself there was rebellion. Apries had aroused the jealousy of the Egyptians by his pro-Hellenic policy, and Amasis, his brother-in-law, led a revolt against him. A battle was fought at Sais, and Apries was captured and deposed, Amasis succeeding him. Apries was treated well for a time, but afterwards put to death.

Nebuchadnezzar is said to have invaded Egypt in the thirty-seventh year of his reign, to have defeated Amasis and to have overrun the Delta, but the information concerning the invasion is exceedingly scanty, and it may never have taken place.

Amasis endeavoured to develop the material resources of the country, and in so doing made a free use of foreigners. Although it was the anti-Hellenic policy which had placed him upon the throne, his accession made no difference to the Greeks, who were too useful to be done without. He encouraged their settlement, and allowed them to found Naucratis in the Western Delta on the model of a Greek city. During this reign Egypt

was visited by three eminent Greek philosophers, Solon, Thales and Phythagoras, and Greek influence began to permeate Egypt more and more.

At this time a new power was arising in Asia, Cyrus the Great having begun his career of conquest. Crœsus, king of Lydia, alarmed at the progress of the conqueror, persuaded Egypt and Babylon to join in alliance against him. The alliance was very ineffective, for Cyrus could attack the confederates in turn, and they were too far apart to support one another. Accordingly Lydia was first reckoned with, then Babylon fell, and only Egypt remained. Cyrus had work nearer home and postponed his vengeance, and but that Amasis committed a further folly in attacking Cyprus and withdrawing it from Persian suzerainty, his earlier fault might have been forgotten. But this second defiance could not pass unpunished, and when Cambyses succeeded Cyrus he at once made arrangements for the invasion of Egypt both by land and sea.

Amasis died before Cambyses reached the country, and Psamatik III., who succeeded him, proved no match for the Persians. After being defeated at Pelusium he fled to Memphis, where he was besieged. The city was taken by assault, after acts of ferocity on both sides. Psamatik was captured and spared for a time, but afterwards executed, and with his death the twenty-sixth dynasty came to an end.

CHAPTER X

PERSIAN SUPREMACY

THE Persian conquest brought to an end a dynasty which had ruled Egypt well, and under which she had enjoyed a fair measure of prosperity.

The account given by Herodotus of the actions of Cambyses represents him as tyrannising over the people and showing contempt for their religious feelings, but recent discoveries prove his stories to be unfounded. Formerly it was supposed that Cyrus and Cambyses were monotheists, and it was thought that the latter might on that account have shown contempt for the gods of Egypt, but we now know that they were idolaters themselves, and therefore by no means likely to have been intolerant of Egyptian idolatry. Monuments have been discovered representing Cambyses in attitudes of worship before Egyptian gods, and there seems no reason to believe that he was regarded by the Egyptians with more dislike than was natural towards a conqueror. Cambyses spent the greater part of his reign in Egypt; but, after his death, the country was left in the hands of satraps, who governed in very arbitrary fashion, and caused the name of Persia to become hateful to the Egyptians.

Unfortunately for himself Cambyses was not content with the conquest of Egypt, but determined also to conquer Africa, and planned expeditions against Carthage, the oasis of Amon and Ethiopia. The first had to be abandoned

because the Phœnicians, who formed the bulk of his fleet, refused to attack their own colony; he sent 50,000 men against the oasis and not one returned, and finally when he himself led an army against Ethiopia it ran short of supplies, and had to return precipitately to escape disaster. These reverses lowered Cambyses' prestige, and, combined with his long absence from the capital, encouraged revolution.

Cyrus had left two sons, Cambyses and Bardes, but shortly after their father's death Cambyses had his brother secretly assassinated. Afterwards, during his absence in Egypt, a man named Gomates, who resembled Bardes in appearance, personated him and seized the throne. Cambyses heard of the revolution and started homeward, but died on the way, leaving the usurper master of the empire. After a few months a counter conspiracy was raised against Gomates, he was slain, and the empire fell into the hands of Darius Hystaspis.

Darius had some trouble in subduing the revolts against his rule which sprang up on every side, but after the empire was pacified he undertook, with great earnestness and ability, the work of organisation. The empire was divided into satrapies, each of which was governed by a ruler appointed by the king and bound very closely to the central authority. In Egypt Darius seems to have acted with judgment, and to have pleased the people by assuming the titles of their ancient kings.

The battle of Marathon greatly discredited the arms of Persia, and the patriotic party in Egypt were encouraged to rise against their conquerors.

They were successful in defeating and expelling the Persian garrisons, and setting a native sovereign, Khabbash, on the throne. Darius prepared to quell the revolt, but died before this was achieved. Xerxes, his son, succeeded him, and reconquered Egypt, using much severity, and appointing his brother, Achæmenes, as satrap, who ruled with an iron hand. When Xerxes invaded Greece, Egypt supplied 200 ships to the fleet which accompanied his ill-fated expedition.

During the reign of Artaxerxes I. Egypt again revolted, and a prolonged war ensued. The Egyptians, led by Inarus, king of Libya, and Amyrtæus, an Egyptian, were at first successful, the Persian garrisons being destroyed and Achæmenes slain. At this time Athens was under the government of Pericles, who, thinking it wise to attack Persia wherever he could, sent 200 galleys to help the Egyptians. A few years later, the war being still prolonged, another expedition of the same magnitude was sent by Athens, and it was evident that nothing but a supreme effort would enable Persia to maintain a hold upon her dependency. Artaxerxes accordingly sent a huge army under Megabazus, and after varied fortune the rebellion was crushed. The Athenian fleet had sailed up the Nile to Memphis, and Megabazus, having cut off their retreat, besieged them with their Egyptian allies in the island of Prosopitis. He next diverted one of the branches of the Nile so that his forces could reach the island on foot, and then crossing with overwhelming numbers cut them to pieces. Of the Athenians only a few scattered fugitives escaped, Inarus was killed and Amyrtæus driven into the marshes of

the Delta. Not long after these events Herodotus visited Egypt, and he describes the battle-field strewn with the ghastly relics of the fight.

Under Darius Nothus Egypt again rose, and this time with so much success that for more than half a century she maintained independence. During this period she had three dynasties of native kings. The twenty-eighth dynasty consisted of but one king, Amyrtæus, perhaps the grandson of the friend and ally of King Inarus. He was succeeded by Nepherites, the first monarch of the twenty-ninth dynasty, who reigned for seven years and sent a fleet of 100 ships to help the Spartans, but it was intercepted by the Athenian fleet at Rhodes and dispersed. The thirtieth dynasty was founded by Nectanebo I., whose capital was Sebennytus. Artaxerxes II. was now king of Persia, and, determined to subdue Egypt, he sent an overwhelming force of Persians and Greek mercenaries under the joint command of Pharnabazus and Iphicrates. They easily scattered the Egyptians who were guarding the frontier, and Iphicrates wished to push on to Memphis without delay, and strike at the heart of the empire, but Pharnabazus refused, and the result was disastrous. The season for campaigning in Egypt passed, the Nile rose, the Egyptians gathered forces and won a battle, and the army had to be withdrawn. This success greatly increased the reputation of Nectanebo, and Egypt had peace for some years, and again lifted up her head.

Tachos, who succeeded Nectanebo, unwisely provoked Persia by attacking Phœnicia—one of her provinces. He made alliance with Agesilaus, king of Sparta, and was also aided by a Greek

fleet. Sparta was in sore straits for money, and Tachos offered heavy subsidies in return for help, so Agesilaus himself led the Spartan contingent. But Tachos foolishly quarrelled with Agesilaus and went to Phœnicia in person against his advice, so when during his absence his cousin Nectanebo revolted, Agesilaus and his mercenaries went over to the side of the usurper and deposed Tachos, who took refuge at the court of Artaxerxes. Nectanebo II. rewarded Agesilaus generously for his services, and the Spartan king, now eighty-four years of age, set out to take the money home, but died on the way.

For a time Nectanebo II. governed the country successfully, and many monuments testify to his endeavours to cultivate art. With the aid of Greek generals and mercenary troops he successfully resisted the Persians, who again and again invaded Egypt. But at last Artaxerxes III. (Ochus) determined to reduce the country, and raised a mighty army of 340,000 men, with which he advanced upon Egypt. Nectanebo had also a large force, including 20,000 Greeks, and might have made a stand, but at the first repulse he lost heart and fell back on Memphis, whence, on the approach of Ochus, he fled southward into Ethiopia. Ochus then crushed out the rebellion with great cruelty, and Egypt once more became a Persian satrapy, and was never again free.

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CHAPTER XI

MACEDONIAN SUPREMACY

THE Persians used their new lease of power in Egypt injudiciously. Themselves monotheists, they had little regard for idol worshippers, but persecuted their priests and took no care of their temples. In other respects they governed well enough. Their taxation does not seem to have been oppressive; at any rate Alexander did not reduce it when he became master of the country.

The news of Alexander's invasion and of his success at the Granicus created a sensation in Egypt, and after the battle of Issus the Egyptians looked forward to his coming with pleasure—both priests and people hoping that the change of masters would bring them some relief. Alexander accordingly entered Egypt unopposed, and his march towards Memphis was a triumphal progress. The city at once opened its gates and made him a present of 800 talents—a welcome addition to his treasury.

Gratified by his reception, Alexander showed the Egyptians every consideration, respecting their religious feelings and sacrificing to their local gods. From Memphis he planned an excursion into the Libyan desert to the oasis where stood the renowned temple of Jupiter Ammon. Sailing on the Nile, he was struck with the capacities of the place where Alexandria now stands. At that time it was only a fishing village, but he gave orders to lay the foundation of a city. The site was well chosen, and the city was after-

wards fostered by the Ptolemies, so that it became great, and is to-day his most substantial monument.

From Alexandria he made his way into the desert, marching for five days with a select body of troops until he reached the temple. The priests, well advised, hailed him in the name of the god as son of Zeus, and told him he was destined to conquer the world. It was the custom for the priests at this shrine to give a certificate of divine origin to Egyptian kings, and to the Egyptians it meant little more than that the priesthood was satisfied with the succession, but Alexander did not realise the hollowness of the declaration and it turned his head. Persuading himself that what they said in meaningless flattery was solemn truth, he grew vainglorious and was delighted when anyone pretended to pay him divine honours. His Macedonian comrades were under no misapprehension about his origin, and to them the whole thing seemed ridiculous, so that there was less sympathy between the conqueror and his staff after this incident.

Alexander remodelled the government before he left Egypt. He appointed Cleomenes as his chief minister, making him responsible for the tribute, and left trusty garrisons and a sufficient force to keep the country in order. Cleomenes seems to have governed the Egyptians oppressively, and had Alexander lived to return to Egypt he would doubtless have called him to account. There is a story that Alexander wrote to Cleomenes after the death of Hephæstion and informed him that he knew of his crimes, but would pardon him if he carried out his instructions regarding the deification of his friend. The

letter is probably a forgery, but it is clear enough that Cleomenes was tyrannical, though there seems evidence that his hand pressed more heavily upon foreigners than natives, and upon the rich rather than the poor.

Alexander died without having revisited Egypt, and the satrapy fell to the share of Ptolemy, a favourite companion, if not relative, of the young king. The corpse of the conqueror was carried with great pomp to Memphis, and thence to Alexandria, where it was buried. The original plan seems to have been to bury Alexander in the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, which he had visited in the oasis, but Perdiccas, the regent, seeing that the possession of the body would give Ptolemy an advantage, afterwards ordered that it should go to Macedonia. Ptolemy, however, met the procession when it reached Palestine, and diverted it to Egypt.

Perdiccas does not seem to have been favourably disposed towards Ptolemy, for it is said that he named Cleomenes as his colleague in the government of Egypt, but Ptolemy settled the question of rivalry by putting Cleomenes to death. He knew, however, that he would not be left to govern Egypt in peace, for Perdiccas, who had been appointed regent, wanted to keep as much power as possible in his own hands, hoping ultimately to reunite the empire under his rule. Accordingly Ptolemy prepared for attack, and was ready when it came. Perdiccas attempted to cross the Nile in the face of the enemy, but was unsuccessful, and his soldiers mutinied and murdered him, after which most of them joined themselves to Ptolemy.

Thus began the Ptolemaic dynasty, which held the throne of Egypt for about three centuries, forming one of the brightest periods of Egyptian history. The later Ptolemies were not estimable, but the first three, Soter, Philadelphus and Euergetes, whose reigns lasted for a century, were amongst the best rulers Egypt ever had.

CHAPTER XII

THE EARLY PTOLEMIES

THOUGH the generals of the Macedonian army had kept the real power in their own hands, they had nominated Philip Arridæus, Alexander's half-brother, as his successor, appointing Perdiccas as regent to govern the empire on behalf of Philip, and guard the interests of Alexander's child, who was as yet unborn.

We have seen how Perdiccas and Ptolemy at once fell out, and how the quarrel ended with the death of the former. A few years after, Philip was put to death, and there remained only the young prince, in whose name the various generals now governed. At last he also was murdered, and there was nothing to prevent Ptolemy and the rest from assuming the royal title. Ptolemy was, however, really king from the time when he first entered Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great.

Ptolemy I. was a successful ruler. He had proved himself a capable fighter when in the service of Alexander, and he fought when neces-

sary in defence of his kingdom, but he does not seem to have been enamoured of war, preferring the more solid virtues of peace. He was apparently a man of only moderate ability, but he had an abundance of common sense, and Egypt prospered under his rule.

We know wonderfully little of Egypt's home affairs at this time, but the country must have been rich, and Ptolemy did all he could to further its interests. The seat of government was at Alexandria—a city which increased rapidly in importance, and was soon the centre of a large trade. Commerce was encouraged in every way, and free intercourse with the outer world. Many Greeks settled in Egypt, and Jews also came in large numbers. Josephus professes that the latter came under compulsion, but it seems more likely that they were attracted by Ptolemy's liberality and kind treatment. They settled especially in Alexandria, forming a distinct community, and receiving rights of citizenship.

Endeavouring to emulate the Athenian schools of learning, Ptolemy I. founded the University of Alexandria, and so well endowed its chairs that the most cultivated men in Europe gathered round, amongst whom we may name Euclid, the mathematician; Hipparchus, the astronomer; and Manetho, the historian.

Unfortunately, while we can speak highly of Ptolemy's treatment of foreigners, the native Egyptians did not fare quite so well at his hands. True, their religion was respected and their customs were not interfered with, and in these respects Greek rule was more palatable than Persian. Ptolemy was careful to keep the priest-

hood on his side, so he left their endowments unimpaired and spent money freely on their temples. For the most part, however, the natives became hewers of wood and drawers of water. Their laws were respected, but they were administered by Greeks, and in every department of government the Greek was supreme. Greek was the official language, and unless a native received a Greek education he had little chance of preferment. As for the humbler Egyptian, the fellah, he had to find the revenue—the usual privilege of his class. Nevertheless, he was as well off under the Ptolemies as he had been under the Pharaohs.

In foreign affairs Ptolemy had at first varied fortune. He gained the adherence of Cyrene without much trouble, and added also the island of Cyprus to his empire. He next proceeded to seize Syria and was at first successful, holding it for five years, after which Antigonus seized it. Later Antigonus and Demetrius his son defeated Ptolemy's fleet at Cyprus; and, encouraged by this success, planned an invasion of Egypt. They did not choose the best season, however, and suffered so much from storms that they had eventually to retreat to avert serious disaster. A few years later a coalition was formed against Antigonus, who was defeated and slain at the battle of Ipsus. Ptolemy had been a member of the coalition, and, though he had not helped in the battle, he seized upon Lower Syria and Phœnicia, claiming them as his portion, and it did not suit the others at that time to contest his claim. In the end, therefore, Ptolemy I. ruled over an empire which embraced Egypt, Cyrene,

Cyprus, Palestine and Phœnicia. He had also great influence over the islands of the Ægean and the free cities of Asia Minor. A league was formed of which he was made president, and he received from the Rhodians the title of Soter (saviour) by which he is known, in recognition of his having saved them from subjection to Antigonus. Ptolemy's last years were prosperous and peaceful; and when an old man, he abdicated in favour of his son, at whose court he lived for two years and then died at the age of eighty-four.

Ptolemy II., known as Philadelphus, though the name was probably given after his death, was the youngest son of his father, but was born of Berenice, his favourite wife, after he had assumed the title of king. The eldest son, Ptolemy Keraunos, was in Thrace at the time of his father's death, and was never in a position to contest the crown with his brother. Another elder brother, Magas, was regent of Cyrene, and Ptolemy II. permitted him to retain that province under an arrangement by which on his death it would revert to Egypt.

Ptolemy II. proved an excellent ruler. He reopened the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, founded several ports on the Red Sea and made roads from them to the Nile. By these means and by the establishment of caravan routes he did much to develop commerce, and trade was carried on freely with Europe, Arabia and the Soudan. Under him the Egyptian monarchy rose to great power, and he became very rich, so that he could maintain a large army and navy, and keep his frontier well guarded.

In literary tastes Ptolemy II. was not behind

his father. Alexandria continued to be a centre for Hellenistic culture; Manetho, the historian, was instructed to translate the ancient records of Egypt, and produced a work which, though not much thought of at the time, has been fully appreciated since. During this reign also the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, known as the Septuagint, was undertaken. Like his father he treated the Jews with kindness, giving them allotments in various parts of Egypt. He developed the province of the Fayum, erecting an embankment known as the "Arsinoe" in honour of his favourite wife, and he gave allotments both there and on the other crown lands to the soldiers.

During this reign the Alexandrian lighthouse on the island of Pharos was built. It was of white marble and of great height, so that the light could be seen many miles from the harbour. The foreign policy of Ptolemy II. was as far as possible pacific, but he resisted an attack of Magas, his half-brother, from Cyrene; and he had wars with Syria. By far the most important act of his reign, in regard to foreign affairs, was the offer of alliance to Rome. The embassy was sent by Ptolemy just after the Romans had defeated Pyrrhus, and it marked the recognition of Rome as a great power. The Roman Senate replied with dignity and cordiality, and thus a friendship was begun between Rome and Egypt which lasted during the Ptolemaic dynasty.

On the death of Philadelphus, he was succeeded by his eldest son Ptolemy III., surnamed by the people Euergetes.

A serious quarrel broke out between Egypt and

Syria at this time. The sister of the young king had been given in marriage to the king of Syria, but when her husband died both she and her infant son were assassinated. Ptolemy determined to avenge her death, and, having been left by his father a fine army and abundant treasure, he made several successful campaigns. He first attacked the coasts of Asia Minor and seized the treasure cities of Cilicia. He next captured Seleucia at the mouth of the Orontes, and marched on Antioch, which yielded at once. He then crossed the Euphrates and traversed Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Susiana, Persia and Media, bringing back from Persia gods which had formerly been carried from Egypt by Persian kings, together with a vast amount of booty. His return was hastened by news of discontent at home. There had been a failure of the inundation of the Nile, and the people, threatened by famine and angry at his long absence and apparent inattention to their needs, were rising against him. He returned, however, before the revolt spread, and the spoil which he brought with him may have done something to appease the people.

After so much success in his first campaigns it might have been expected that Ptolemy III. would have continued to prosecute the art of war, but it was not so. He made no attempt to rule permanently over the vast area which he had conquered, but contented himself with holding Cœle-Syria and such places as enabled him to command the sea up to the Hellespont. He thus gained and kept during his reign the control of the Levant, besides having immense influence amongst the commercial cities of the Ægean and

in Greece itself. But he found that it was a wiser policy to manage foreign affairs by diplomacy and subsidy than by wasting his substance and risking his all in war.

Ptolemy III. was nowise behind his predecessors in the encouragement of learning. He seems to have been himself of scientific tastes, and the university in Alexandria was encouraged by him, and was as famous as ever during his reign. He appointed Eratosthenes of Cyrene, a man of very extensive learning, as his librarian and tutor to his children. A poem is extant from Eratosthenes to the king giving the solution of a geometrical problem.

A document called the decree of Canopus, of which copies have been preserved, contains some interesting matter, and amongst other things an account of the reform of the calendar by the introduction of leap-year. "In order that the seasons may correspond regularly to the establishment of the world, and that it may not occur that some of the national feasts kept in winter may come to be kept in summer, the sun changing one day in every four years, and that other feasts now kept in summer may come to be kept in winter in future times, as has formerly happened, and now would happen if the arrangement of the year remained of 360 days, and the five additional days added; from now onward one day, a feast of the benefactor gods, shall be added every four years to the five additional days before the new year."

During the reign of Ptolemy III. there was a terrible earthquake at Rhodes, which threw down the Colossus. Rhodes was a great banking

centre, and there was much loss and commercial panic. It is interesting to know that various kings came forward to aid the Rhodian bankers and citizens to tide over the crisis. Amongst those who helped was Ptolemy, whose donations were liberal.

During his reign he planned and founded a great temple at Edfu, at which all his successors in the dynasty laboured, and which was at last only finished by Ptolemy Auletes nearly two centuries after.

Ptolemy III. was on the whole a capable king, and seems to have been possessed of moral qualities which Oriental monarchs frequently lack. Egypt had now been ruled for a century by his family, and had never known better government. The period has been not unfitly called her golden age. It is true that the government was on Greek lines, that the Greek language was used, and that most of the leading officials were Greek. But the Egyptians were oppressed less by their Greek sovereigns than they had been by the Pharaohs. They enjoyed peace at home, their commerce extended throughout the known world, they were prosperous and contented, and art and learning flourished. The university had schools of mathematics, astronomy, medicine and philosophy, and earnest students were attracted from all lands. So far the Ptolemaic dynasty had been a blessing to Egypt, but unfortunately the golden age was not destined to last.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LATER PTOLEMIES

THE Ptolemies who had for three generations sat upon the throne of Egypt had been men of character and ability, but Ptolemy IV. (Philopator) a prince of inferior type fell under evil influence, and spent in debauchery the energy which should have been devoted to the interests of the empire.

Antiochus the Great was now king of Syria, and scarcely had he ascended the throne when he tried to wrest from Egypt the provinces of Cœle-Syria and Palestine. It is probable that Ptolemy III. had in his last years neglected military affairs, for the young king was without an army and Antiochus captured Seleucia and Tyre and extended his power southward with little opposition. Ptolemy, however, bestirred himself and at last gathered an army in which were many mercenaries and natives drilled in Macedonian fashion and led by Greek generals. With this army he encountered Antiochus at Raphia, near Gaza, and was completely victorious, but he gave Antiochus easy terms, contenting himself with keeping Palestine and Phœnicia. He spent three months marching from city to city in these provinces, and it was on this occasion that he visited Jerusalem and insisted on entering the Holy of Holies. The battle of Raphia had taught Antiochus that Egypt could not be attacked with impunity, and he made no further effort against her Syrian provinces until the death of Ptolemy IV.

During this reign Rome was engaged in fighting against Hannibal, and it seemed likely that Philip of Macedon would make alliance with the African against his great enemy. As Philip and Antiochus were sovereigns whom Egypt had cause to fear, Ptolemy sympathised with Rome, and the alliance which had so long existed was renewed.

The foreign relations of Egypt were not materially altered during this reign, but there was discontent at home. It may be that the victory at Raphia had taught the natives their power, and that they had begun to wonder why so much favour should be lavished upon Greeks, or they may have merely risen against oppression. At all events there were two serious revolts—the former in Lower Egypt, not quenched without years of bloodshed, the latter in Upper Egypt, left by Philopator as a legacy to his son.

The king had some of the love for letters which distinguished his predecessors, but love of debauchery was his overmastering passion. At the beginning of his reign he connived at the murder of his mother, Berenice, and at his death the affairs of government were in the hands of brutal favourites, who murdered his wife, Arsinoe, the mother of his infant son.

The murder of Arsinoe greatly exasperated the Egyptians. She had been popular, and the household troops mutinied, and, having obtained possession of the infant king, tore the murderers of his mother in pieces.

Ptolemy V. (Epiphanes), whose reign began under such unhappy circumstances, was placed under the guardianship of able and trustworthy

ministers. Philip of Macedon and Antiochus of Syria, thinking a golden opportunity had come, lost no time in allying themselves, with the intention of dividing young Ptolemy's possessions between them. Of these Philip coveted the islands of the Ægean, whilst Antiochus set his mind upon Cœle-Syria and Palestine. Had they attacked Egypt at once they might have been successful, but they delayed for three years, and these were eventful years, for during them was fought the battle of Zama, which broke the power of Carthage irretrievably, and left Rome free to attend to affairs in the east.

After Zama, Rome sent an embassy to thank the Egyptians for their neutrality during the Punic War, and the ambassadors learnt of the partition treaty between Syria and Macedonia. Partly out of friendship for Egypt, partly because it did not suit their views that either Philip or Antiochus should become unduly powerful, the Romans kept a benevolent eye upon the affairs of their old ally, and saw that she did not come to much harm.

Philip's ambition to become suzerain of the Ægean was checked by his defeat at the hands of the Rhodians, and finally extinguished at Cynoscephalæ. Antiochus was held back for a time by Scopas, the Egyptian general, but when Scopas was beaten and Antiochus had Egypt at his mercy the Romans compelled him to make peace—the peace being cemented by the betrothal of his daughter Cleopatra to the young king, with a promised dowry of half the revenues of Cœle-Syria.

Epiphanes was thus relieved from foreign

dangers, but he lost his empire. The islands of the Ægean and the Greek cities of Asia, granted autonomy by Rome, no longer sent tribute to Egypt; and though the king married Cleopatra in due time, and thus obtained an accession of revenue, the Romans did not allow either Cœle-Syria or Palestine to pass again under the power of Egypt.

At home also Egypt had many troubles. The revolt in Upper Egypt, which had begun in the reign of Philopator, lasted until the nineteenth year of the reign of his son. This caused the revenue to fall, so that the king was not as rich as his fathers.

Towards the end of his reign he determined to win back Cœle-Syria and raised an army for that purpose, but having spoken unguardedly concerning some friends who had not been forward enough with their support, he was poisoned when only twenty-nine years of age.

He was succeeded by his eldest son, Ptolemy Eupator, who had been associated with him on the throne, but nothing is known about him except his name.

Philometor, a younger brother of Eupator, now reigned as Ptolemy VII., and about the same time Antiochus IV. (Epiphanes) succeeded to the throne of Syria. Cleopatra having died, a dispute arose between Syria and Egypt concerning the dowry of the Syrian revenues, in which Antiochus declared that Cleopatra had only a life interest. War ensued and the Egyptians were defeated, Philometor being made a prisoner. Antiochus soon conquered all Egypt excepting Alexandria, and was besieging it when an envoy

arrived from Rome and ordered him to cease. Antiochus dared not face a war with Rome and withdrew his army. Philometor thus reinstated showed himself a worthy king, having many excellent qualities, and at last died in battle.

A child was put on the throne as Ptolemy VIII., but the brother of Philometor, Euergetes, came from Cyrene, where he had been governor, and took up the sceptre as Ptolemy IX., known as Physkon. Many evil things have been said about this king, but they have no very substantial foundation. He seems to have been kindly disposed towards the Jews, and to have favoured the native Egyptians, and perhaps partly on this account incurred the wrath of the Greeks. He left the empire in a flourishing condition when he died.

It would be profitless to do more than mention Ptolemies X., XI. and XII., concerning whose brief reigns we know almost nothing. The power of Rome was now overshadowing the world, and an utterly selfish commercial spirit had taken hold of the Romans, who only considered how best they might increase their wealth. To this spirit of cupidity Carthage, Corinth and Rhodes had already fallen victims, and Egypt was a rich prize. It was believed that Ptolemy XII. had willed his kingdom to the Romans, and the Egyptians were in a state of chronic fear lest they should lay claim to it. When, therefore, Ptolemy XIII., best known as Auletes, succeeded, he tried hard to obtain from Rome a formal recognition of his sovereignty. The Romans held this back, in spite of enormous bribes, for nearly twenty years, so that it was not until the

consulship of Julius Cæsar that Auletes, by one last bribe of 6000 talents, obtained the coveted recognition. The Egyptians, angry at seeing so much treasure going to Rome, rose against their king, and expelled him from Alexandria. Driven thus into exile he went to Rome and besought the Senate to restore him, but owing to intrigues and disputes the matter was protracted until, with another huge bribe and the consent of Pompey, he obtained the help of Gabinius, the pro-consul in Syria, and after three battles was re-established on the throne. He died four years after this event, leaving two daughters, Cleopatra and Arsinoe, and two sons, both named Ptolemy.

CHAPTER XIV

CLEOPATRA

PTOLEMY AULETES at his death bequeathed his kingdom to his elder daughter, Cleopatra, at that time seventeen years of age, and his elder son, a boy of ten, whom she was eventually to marry. Ever afraid of the influence of Rome, he had sent a copy of his will there, and besought the Roman people not to interfere with its dispositions, but at that time the city had many troubles of her own, and could give little attention to the affairs of Egypt.

Cleopatra showed such independence of spirit that after the joint reign had continued for four years the guardians of the boy king advised him to assume full control, and he drove the queen into exile. Cleopatra went to Syria and gathered an

army, with which she proceeded to invade Egypt. It was the year of Pharsalus, and Pompey, flying from Cæsar, reached Pelusium at the time when the armies of the King and Queen of Egypt lay confronting one another there. As Pompey had been the means of restoring Auletes to the throne, he had some right to expect a favourable reception from his son, and he sent with some confidence to the young king asking permission to land. The advisers of the king were in a dilemma, for if they received Pompey they feared Cæsar, and if they refused he might join Cleopatra. Accordingly they sent a small boat to take him to the shore, where stood the king apparently ready to greet him, but as he stepped from the boat he was stabbed in the back and fell dead.

When Cæsar arrived soon afterwards, Cleopatra threw herself upon his mercy, and her charms at once gained for her his support. He ordered that the will of Auletes should be carried out, and that the brother and sister should reign jointly. Cæsar was justified in this course, for Auletes had besought the Romans to see that the will was observed, but it was soon evident that Cæsar was in love with Cleopatra, and the joint reign meant that she reigned alone.

There was in Alexandria at this time a very dangerous and turbulent populace, consisting of refugees from other lands, pirates and the old Gabinian soldiers who had settled in Egypt. None of these had any sympathy with Cæsar, and when they saw him assuming the government, imposing military law, and, above all, seizing the treasure, they were exasperated. In all there must have been 20,000 men under arms in

Alexandria, whilst Cæsar had with him only a small force of 2000 men.

Arsinoe, Cleopatra's younger sister, and the young king escaped from the palace and put themselves at the head of the people, and a fierce struggle ensued. Cæsar sent to Asia for help and meanwhile tried conciliation, but it was in vain, and his life was in imminent peril. The palace was assaulted, efforts were made to cut off the water supply from his troops, and he had to burn his fleet to save it from falling into the hands of the enemy. In the conflagration a great number of papyrus rolls were destroyed, and this gave rise to the belief in after years that the Alexandrine Library had been burnt. At last the reinforcements arrived from Asia, the Egyptians were defeated, and the young king was drowned.

Cleopatra was now settled upon the throne with a yet younger brother as colleague, and with Roman legions to protect her rights. After Cæsar returned to Rome Cleopatra followed him, taking with her their infant son named Cæsarion, and her brother, Ptolemy XV., who seems to have been poisoned during his stay at Rome. After the fall of Alexandria, Arsinoe had been sent to Rome, and led in Cæsar's triumph. Her life was spared, and she returned to Alexandria, but was afterwards put to death by Antony.

Cleopatra returned to Egypt after the assassination of Cæsar, and during the disturbances which ensued in the Roman world she preserved neutrality for a time. She had named her infant son as her colleague on the throne under the title of Ptolemy Cæsar, obtaining, it is said, the consent of the Romans for the act. During these

years famine and pestilence visited Egypt, and when Cassius demanded men and money from Cleopatra, she made the state of the country an excuse for refusal.

At last the campaign of Philippi threw the power into the hands of Antony and Octavian—the former undertaking to govern the east, the latter the west. Antony went to Asia with his legions, and commanded Cleopatra to meet him in Cilicia and explain the somewhat doubtful neutrality of Egypt. The beautiful queen instead of meeting him as a humble suppliant, appeared in the most regal splendour, and Antony lost both his heart and his head. He accompanied her to Egypt and remained there for a time, during which Cleopatra persuaded him to have her sister Arsinoe assassinated. After a while Antony had to tear himself away from Egypt and return to Rome, and there he married Octavia, the sister of his colleague. But when, a year or two after, he was sent against the Parthians, Cleopatra met him at Antioch and he lavished provinces upon her for gifts. When Antony had departed for the east, Cleopatra returned towards Egypt, and on her way southward met Herod the Great in Jerusalem. Herod was himself building up a kingdom by Roman favour, and he knew that Cleopatra was his most dangerous rival. He would gladly have slain her, but feared the wrath of Antony, so he had her led out of his dominions to her own frontier with politeness but celerity.

Antony returned defeated from Parthia, and was met again in Syria by Cleopatra, who brought succour to him. He retired with her to Egypt

and prepared for a second campaign. In this he was more successful, so he celebrated a Roman triumph at Alexandria, and bestowed great part of the eastern world upon Cleopatra and her sons. This gave rise to much dissatisfaction in Rome, and when he at length divorced his wife Octavia, thus breaking the bond between himself and his colleague, war speedily ensued. Had Antony attacked Octavian at once he might have been successful, but he delayed; and when at last he took decisive action he made the great mistake of allowing Cleopatra to accompany him to the seat of war.

The rival fleets joined battle at Actium, and Cleopatra, yielding perhaps to womanly fear, fled. Antony followed her, and thus every chance of victory was thrown away. In the following year Octavian sailed to Egypt, and Cleopatra, seeing that Antony's fortunes were now in desperate case, made an effort to negotiate with the conqueror. It was in vain, and she then caused a report of her death to be spread, and took refuge in a mausoleum which she had built. Antony followed her to the mausoleum, stabbed himself and died in her arms. She made one further effort to soften the heart of Octavian, but when she found that it was in vain, and that he intended to carry her to Rome to grace his triumph, rather than become sport to the people she died by her own hand.

Thus passed away, in the thirty-ninth year of her age, Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemies, and one of the most striking figures in the ancient world. Whatever her faults may have been, she was a woman of extraordinary ability and

fascinating power, and under more favourable circumstances she might have recovered for Egypt something of its former greatness. Octavian slew her sons Cæsarion and Antyllus; the third son is unaccounted for. Her daughter is said to have married Juba, the king of Mauretania, who had accompanied Octavian to Egypt. Egypt now became a Roman province, and was put under a prefect—the government being kept jealously under the personal control of the emperor, and closed to senators, lest a rival empire should be established.

THE STORY OF THE HEBREWS

CHAPTER I

THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL

In dealing with this most interesting and important race, there is difficulty in choosing a name in which there shall be no ambiguity. If we call them the "Jews," we seem to exclude the tribes specially known as Israelites; if we speak of the "Israelites," we seem to exclude the Jews. Perhaps the name of "Hebrews" gives rise to less confusion than any other. Yet there was originally nothing Israelitish or Jewish about the word Hebrew, which did not come from the name of a special ancestor as has been supposed, but simply meant "a dweller on the other side," or "a crosser of the river." The word occurs first in Genesis, where a fugitive from the raid of the kings, in which Lot was captured, came and told "Abram, the Hebrew." Later, when Joseph in prison entreated the chief butler to befriend him, he said: "For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews." Whether at this time the word applied exclusively to the descendants of Abram, or was a general term by which the Canaanites were known to the Egyptians, we cannot say, but certainly its use became after-

wards limited to the children of Abram, and it has been freely accepted by them. This contracted use of the name may be traced as far back as the Oppression, when the Egyptians speak of "the Hebrew women," and Pharaoh's daughter says of Moses, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Abram, the progenitor of this great race, was a Babylonian, born in Ur, a city with which the ruins of Mugheir are now identified. The city was in early days the seat of a dynasty of kings who gained ascendency over Babylonia and carried their arms both east and west. They were not the first Babylonian kings who had invaded the west, for in earlier times Sargon, king of Accad, had left memorials of an expedition on the shores of the Mediterranean, and his son, Naram-Sin, had gone as far as the Sinaitic peninsula. Thus early, therefore, Babylonia and Canaan were associated, and when the Babylonian kings were powerful enough, they treated the petty kings of Palestine as vassals. Records which have come to light prove that there was much commercial intercourse between the countries, and that the Babylonian language and Babylonish customs were familiar to the Canaanites. Hence there was nothing strange about the migration of Abram's family to Canaan, and we can understand the ease with which he fitted into his new surroundings.

In the time of Abram, Ur was decaying. It had given place to Babylon and Babylon to Larsa, of which Eri-Aku was prince. In Babylonia, Khammurabi ruled, but both Larsa and Babylonia had been conquered by Kudur-Laga-

mar, king of Elam, and Eri-Aku and Khammurabi were his vassals.

The patriarchal family which left Ur and went to Harran consisted of Terah, his sons, Abram and Nahor, and their wives, Sarai and Milcah, their nephew Lot, whose father had died in Ur, and others of less importance. Harran was a city on the northern Babylonian frontier, in the district known as Padan Aram, and between it and Ur there was much affinity in customs and religion. After Terah's death, Nahor and his family remained in Harran, but Abram moved southward to Canaan, accompanied by his nephew Lot, and their respective households. There was a famine in Canaan shortly after their arrival, and they went down to Egypt for a time; for, as that country has the advantage of the Nile inundation, it is less dependent on local rainfall, and often has abundance when other countries are suffering from drought. At this time Egypt was under the rule of the Asiatic invaders known as the Hyksos, kings of either Elamitic or Arabian origin. Their seat of government was just over the frontier, at Zoan, in the eastern corner of the Delta, so that Abram came into contact with the court; and, being a rich sheikh of much the same race as themselves, he was well received.

On their return from Egypt to Canaan, Abram and Lot parted company—the latter preferring to dwell in the prosperous but profligate cities of the Jordan valley, whilst Abram made his home at Mamre, near Hebron, and entered into friendly alliance with Aner, Eshcol and Mamre, neighbouring Amorite chiefs. Not long after the separation, the king of Elam and his vassals raided

the west, conquered the petty kings on the shores of the Dead Sea, who had been his vassals but had revolted, and carried away many captives—Lot amongst the rest. Abram being told of it, hurriedly armed his retainers, and, joined by his Amorite allies, pursued the victorious invaders, attacked their rear guard by night, and recovered both prisoners and booty. This raid was long a puzzle to critics, but cuneiform inscriptions recently discovered enable us to identify the names as given in Genesis, Chedorlaomer, Amraphel, Arioch and Tidal, with Kudur-Lagamar, king of Elam; Khammurabi, king of Babylon; Eri-Aku, king of Larsa; and Tudghula, king of the Kurdish tribes east of the Babylonian frontier. Shortly after this Khammurabi rebelled, and defeated Kudur-Lagamar and Eri-Aku, making Babylonia independent of Elam, so that Abram's successful sally may have led to the freedom of his fatherland.

Returning victorious, Abram was met by Melchizedek, king of Salem. Tablets recently found at Tel el-Amarna in Egypt throw much light on this incident, and confirm the exactness of the Scripture narrative. Amongst these are letters from the king of Urusalim, which show that the city was of much importance, and really the capital of Southern Palestine at a remote date. Some mystery has gathered round Melchizedek because of the illustrations drawn from his person in the sacred writings, but nothing mysterious need be inferred concerning him. He was king of Salem, and priest of the temple erected to "the most high god," the god of peace in that city. He had not inherited this dignity, and nothing is said about his parentage or after life; he appears

and disappears abruptly, having "neither beginning of days nor end of life." These circumstances fitted him for the illustration drawn by the apostle, but as regards himself there is no mystery. The expression "without father or mother," to signify one who had not succeeded to his position by hereditary right, was not unusual. In the Tel el-Amarna tablets the king of Urusalim, a successor of Melchizedek, says "Neither my father nor my mother, but the arm of the mighty king" (that is, the god whose temple stood in Urusalim) "established me." Urusalim being a sacred city, it was entirely in accordance with Babylonian custom that Abram should pay tithes to its priest king, for there are many receipts for tithe amongst the Babylonian tablets which have been found, and thus by independent evidence the narrative in Genesis, long looked upon by critics as incredible, is confirmed in its minutest detail.

Notwithstanding the disasters which had overtaken Lot, he continued to dwell in the cities near the Dead Sea, and narrowly escaped being overwhelmed in their destruction. The method by which they were destroyed may have been more in accordance with natural law than has been generally supposed. The district abounded in naphtha springs, the "slime pits" of which we read being excavations from which the naphtha shale was dug. Thus the soil must have been saturated with highly inflammable oil, and if a thunderstorm burst over the district and the lightning set the oil on fire, the cities would soon be in a blaze. Conflagrations of a similar nature are not unknown in modern times in the oil districts of America and Southern Russia.

Just before the birth of Isaac, his son and heir, God promised Abram that great blessings would be conferred upon mankind through his seed, and, in memory of the covenant, changed his name to Abraham (father of a great multitude), and that of his wife to Sarah (princess). After this came the trial by which he was asked to sacrifice the son on whom his hopes depended. Isaac was now a lad, and must at the last have acquiesced in the proposed sacrifice, but the result showed that it was only God's purpose to demonstrate to all time the unswerving faith of the patriarch. At the critical moment the hand was stayed, and the will accepted for the deed.

The death of Sarah led to the purchase of a burying place from the Hittites. In recent years many Babylonian contract tablets have been found, and the manner of the contract of sale as recorded in Genesis is in harmony with these. At a later period the procedure was altered, so that the description of the purchase of the field of Machpelah fixes it as pre-Mosaic. It is noteworthy, as showing how honourable men were in their dealings in that primitive age, that when Jacob died, two centuries later, his embalmed remains were carried to the same burial place, the rights of property having been respected all that time.

Abraham, as was the custom, had several wives and many sons besides Isaac, and these scattering eastward became progenitors of tribes, some of whom even at the present day are proud to trace their origin to El-Khalil, "the friend" of God.

CHAPTER II

JOSEPH

THE life of Isaac was uneventful. He had by Rebecca twin sons, Esau and Jacob, and the latter was chosen by God as the one through whom the promised blessings should descend. As the boys grew into men the wisdom of the choice became apparent, for Esau led a wandering desert life—becoming head of the Edomites, whilst Jacob became more thoughtful as he grew older, and better suited to be the progenitor of a settled people.

In Jacob's early days his conduct was deceitful, and he was punished by having to flee from his father's house and live in exile. He went to Harran, where Nahor's branch of the family still dwelt, and there married his cousins Leah and Rachel. In partnership with his uncle Laban he prospered, and when at length he turned homeward he had great wealth and a numerous family. Although so many years had passed, he dreaded meeting his brother whom he had deceived, and was terrified when he heard that he was coming to meet him at the head of a formidable Edomite band. His terror drove him to God, his fears were calmed, and next day the brothers met in friendship. Many years after when the Israelites, marching towards Canaan, desired to cross the land of Edom, Moses referred to the relationship, saying, "Thus saith thy brother Israel," and when the king of Edom refused peaceful passage

the Israelites did not declare war upon him, but went by a round-about way.

Jacob's sons were far from perfect, and some of them caused their father much sorrow. Joseph, Rachel's first-born, was an exception, and was his father's favourite, but the ground of preference was spiritual affinity and nobility of character. His superiority made him hateful to his brethren, and they sold him to a caravan of merchants, who were proceeding to Egypt with their wares.

The story of Joseph in Egypt is exquisite in every detail, and beautifully describes the Egyptian life of that period. It is not necessary to repeat the story here. We know how, under trying circumstances, Joseph gave proof of rectitude and capacity, and was promoted, first in his master's house and afterwards in prison. The amnesty on Pharaoh's birthday and the release of his fellow-prisoner followed, and at last Joseph gained Pharaoh's favour by interpreting his dream. The shaving of Joseph before he could be admitted into Pharaoh's presence, the suddenness of his elevation, the throwing of the chain of gold around his neck, the running before his chariot crying, "The seer, the seer," the new name which he received, Zaphnath-paaneah, the name of his wife, Asenath, and of his father-in-law, Potiphera, are all suggestive of the Egypt of that time.

Pharaoh's dream had foretold seven years of plenty to be followed by seven of famine, and Joseph, as his representative, utilised the years of plenty by storing corn to be sold to the people when the famine came. His methods have been criticised, and some say that he reduced the people to the condition of serfs, buying their

persons and lands for Pharaoh. There is reason to believe, however, that his measures, instead of depressing, improved the condition of the people. From the monuments we gather that a change took place in land tenure during the Hyksos' dynasty, and doubtless at this very time. Formerly Egypt had been divided amongst the aristocracy, who owned both land and people. Joseph's measures freed the people from all service except that which they owed to the crown, and the land theoretically resumed by Pharaoh was returned by him to the cultivators with a crown title and a uniform rent of one-fifth of the produce. Joseph's method was in fact much the same as the nationalisation of land which some advocate at the present day.

An inscription has been deciphered in a tomb at El-Kab in Upper Egypt, in which one Baba says: "I collected corn, as a friend of the harvest god, I was watchful at the time of sowing. And when a famine arose, lasting many years, I distributed corn to the city each year of famine." The date of the inscription agrees with the time of Joseph, and undoubtedly the same famine is alluded to.

A famine in Egypt did not necessarily mean a famine elsewhere, but in this particular instance Canaan also suffered, and Jacob's sons came to Egypt to buy food. Joseph easily recognised his ten brethren, but they failed to recognise in the gorgeously-apparelled and stately vizier the brother whom they had sold for a slave. The way in which Joseph tested the condition of their hearts is inimitably told, and the concluding incidents when, the cup having been found in Benjamin's

sack, the brethren are advised to save themselves, but, rather than desert their brother, return, certainly to bondage, possibly to death; the manner in which Judah, with the calmness of despair, recounts the story from the beginning and ends by beseeching the grand vizier to accept him as a slave in Benjamin's stead, and thus save their aged father's heart from breaking; Joseph's sudden outburst of emotion and revelation of himself; the terror of the brethren, and the joyful after-events, all these together form a narrative of dramatic beauty almost unsurpassed. At Joseph's request Jacob and the rest of the family migrated to Egypt and settled in Goshen, a fertile province on the eastern side of the Delta, now traversed by the railway from Ismailia to Zagazig, where they prospered and multiplied exceedingly.

We cannot say in whose reign these incidents occurred, but it was during the Hyksos period, and probably towards its close. Some think that Joseph's patron was Apepi II., in whose reign the war of independence broke out, in which case Jacob's family must have settled in Egypt on the eve of troublous times.

In connection with the interview between Pharaoh and Joseph's brethren, the statement is made that "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." This antipathy has been referred to the fact that Egypt had been conquered by the Hyksos, or shepherd kings, but this would be no sufficient explanation, seeing that Pharaoh was himself one of them. The true explanation doubtless is that given by Professor Sayce, who says that "the flocks of the

Delta were tended partly by Bedouin, partly by half-caste Egyptians, who were looked on as pariahs."

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE

FOUR centuries elapsed between the migration of the Hebrews into Egypt and the Exodus, and for a time they were well enough treated. But the Pharaoh under whose auspices they had entered Egypt was a member of a foreign dynasty against which a war of independence broke out. The war lasted a long time, but at last ended in the expulsion of the Hyksos kings and the re-establishment of a native dynasty. The Hebrews had thus lost their natural protectors; nevertheless the kings of the eighteenth dynasty, who came upon the scene about this time, did not interfere with them. On the contrary these kings were themselves Asiatic in tone, marrying Syrian wives and introducing foreign customs. One of them, Amenhotep III., married Tyi, a Syrian princess and sun worshipper, and their son, Akhenaten, abandoned the national religion for the worship of the solar disc; and when this led to friction with the priesthood of Thebes, he changed his capital to Tel el-Amarna, and surrounded himself both in his temples and in the government of the country with foreigners. After his death there was a reaction, the foreigners were ejected, and the national religion and nationalist party triumphed. The next kings, therefore,

those of the nineteenth dynasty, gave no quarter to foreigners, and these were the kings who knew not Joseph, but made the lives of the Hebrews "bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field."

There was good reason why tyrannical kings like those who now arose should view with alarm the rapid increase of the Hebrews, seeing that they were aliens, and lived in a quarter where, if inclined to be disloyal, they could lend invaluable aid to Asiatic invaders. The word went forth therefore to treat them with rigour. The free and independent life they had been leading they led no more; their flocks and herds were confiscated; they were treated as captives of war and forced to toil under the lash upon the public works. The Pharaohs of the nineteenth dynasty who treated the Hebrews with such severity were Ramses I., Seti I., Ramses II. and Merenptah, and in an inscription dating from the reign of the last-mentioned the following words occur: "The Israelites are spoiled so that they have no seed."

Moses was born during the reign of Ramses II., the mighty monarch who lived one hundred years, reigned sixty-seven years, and whose embalmed remains have been identified. As the Hebrews continued to increase notwithstanding the cruel treatment to which they were subjected, Ramses ordered their male infants to be slain, a command which was doubtless largely disobeyed. At this juncture Moses was born, and saved from death by Pharaoh's own favourite daughter, Bint-Anat, who, herself half Syrian, had much sympathy with the Hebrews.

Moses received in the palace the best educa-

tion that Egypt could afford, but was in no doubt concerning his parentage, and as he grew older the sufferings of his people burned into his soul. One day, seeing an Egyptian smite a Hebrew, he slew the Egyptian, and the thing becoming known and the anger of Ramses being aroused, Moses fled across the Sinaitic peninsula and took refuge in Midian. Here he was well received, and Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro the priest and prince of Midian, was given him to wife. After the death of Ramses II., there being still no mitigation in the condition of the Hebrews, God ordered Moses to return to Egypt and demand their freedom—his brother Aaron being associated with him in the enterprise. The task was apparently superhuman, and it is no wonder that Moses shrank from it.

The interference of Moses and Aaron at first only added to the miseries of their countrymen. Thousands of them were engaged in the making of bricks, for which much straw was required, partly for mixing with the clay and partly for firing the bricks. The straw and brushwood had been heretofore supplied to the workers in the kilns, but Pharaoh, pretending that the agitation arose from idleness, ordered that the Hebrews should gather these for themselves, thus greatly increasing the labour of the already overburdened bondsmen. In spite, however, of Pharaoh's cruelty and the undisguised hostility of their own people, the brothers persevered, working miracles in the presence of the king as signs of their divine mission. The Egyptian priests, who were clever conjurers, imitated their feats for a time, and Pharaoh was unimpressed, but when

they began to take the form of plagues he wavered and tried to make terms. At first he would permit them to sacrifice to their God "in the land"; then they might go if they would "not go very far away"; then the men might go "and serve the Lord"; and at last they might go if they would leave their cattle behind. But Moses refused to compromise, nothing less than the unconditional emancipation of the people could be considered.

At length the crisis came, and God announced to Moses that He would bring one plague more upon Egypt—a plague so terrible that after it Pharaoh would eagerly thrust them out of the land.

"All the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts.

"And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more."

That night, with their loins girded, shoes on their feet, and staves in their hands, the Hebrews stood alert, partaking of the feast which from that day to this has been a memorial of the great occasion. In the night the awful stroke fell upon Egypt. None were spared. In palace and in dungeon the first-born died. And in the darkness, amidst the clamour and wailing of his people, Pharaoh arose and calling for Moses and Aaron entreated them in God's name to begone.

Three kings succeeded Ramses II., *viz.* Merenptah, Seti II., and Si-Ptah, their united reigns

only covering a period of thirty or forty years at most, after which there was a time of anarchy, followed by the rise of the twentieth dynasty.

The Exodus probably took place in the reign of Merenptah, the immediate successor of Ramses, and though authorities differ as to the precise date, it is now brought within comparatively narrow limits.

There is much doubt about the number of Hebrews who left Egypt. It is given as "600,000 men," and if the word men means grown males, the number of Hebrews would have been about 2,000,000, but this seems inconceivable. There are so many difficulties in connection with the translation of Hebrew numbers that the question cannot be decided at present in a satisfactory way. Professor Sayce thinks the traditional number of 600,000 may have "represented the whole body of fugitives."

The nearest way to Canaan was by the coast, but this district was the scene of much fighting between the Philistines and Egyptians, and there were Egyptian garrisons there, so that Moses led the people by a quieter way, from Ramses to Succoth, and from Succoth to Etham, one of the fortresses which protected the Asiatic frontier of Egypt. Here they turned in a southerly direction, and still keeping within the Egyptian wall of fortification encamped at Pi-hahiroth, near the extremity of the Gulf of Suez, which being enclosed by Egyptian territory on both sides was called the Egyptian Sea. By this time Pharaoh's panic had subsided, and, angry at the loss of his serfs, he determined to pursue. They were still within the line of fortification, and, from the position they

occupied, seemed entirely at his mercy. Accordingly a force of cavalry, composed probably of the bodyguard, the *élite* of the Egyptian army, was quickly on their track, and the terrified Hebrews heaped reproaches on their leader. "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?"

But Moses believed in God, and his faith was justified. In the night a strong east wind blew, driving back the shallow waters of the sea, and leaving a passage through which the people crossed in safety. Seeing their prey about to escape the Egyptians followed, but it was too late. Their chariots stuck in the wet sand, the wind fell, the sea rushed back, and they all perished in the waters.

This disaster to the Egyptian army is not entirely without parallel. Those accustomed to flat sands and high tides know how dangerous they are. When Artaxerxes invaded Egypt with a Persian army, he lost part of it in a similar way, and Napoleon Buonaparte narrowly escaped like peril in the same region.

The Hebrews now no longer feared pursuit, but they were not yet outside Egyptian territory. From early times the Sinaitic peninsula was held more or less effectively by Egypt, and the belief that the Hebrews after thus escaping ran into further danger by wandering amongst the mines and garrisons of this barren peninsula, though still held by some authorities, seems both unreasonable and out of harmony with the Biblical narrative. After they had crossed the sea and passed the fortifications, it is more likely that Moses led the people due east to the extremity of

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the Gulf of Akaba, where they were beyond Egyptian influence, and in a hospitable region lying between Edom and Midian. From these tribes they had reason to expect friendly succour, for the Edomites claimed descent from Abraham, and Moses had lived many years amongst the Midianites, and was married to the daughter of their prince.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATION FORMED

WHILST marching northwards from Akaba they were attacked by Amalekites and had to fight hard; but, under the leadership of Joshua, they were victorious. Shortly after, Jethro, the prince of Midian, visited the camp, and advised his son-in-law concerning the organisation of the new community. After this they were gathered at Sinai—a mountain which some think to have been in the mountains of Seir, and others believe to have been in the barren peninsula which bears its name.

Professor Sayce says that the belief that the Sinaitic peninsula was the scene of the wanderings of the Hebrews is "not only irreconcilable with the facts of Egyptian history but also with the narrative of the Pentateuch itself. It transports the Amalekites or Bedouin of the desert south of Judah to the western side of the Sinaitic peninsula, and performs the same feat for the wilderness of Paran. It makes Jethro, the high priest of Midian, cross the Gulf of Akaba, and make his

way through barren gorges and hostile tribes in order to visit his son-in-law, and sets at defiance the express testimony of Hebrew literature that Mount Sinai was among the mountains of Seir."

"Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.

"The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel."

If this opinion is correct, the Hebrews camped in the fertile valleys of a great mountain range hidden away from the Egyptians, protected by their numbers and by the prestige arising from their success over the Amalekites: dwelling safely and receiving instructions concerning both moral and ceremonial law.

The central thought round which the law clustered was the recognition of Jehovah, the one God, as head of their state, leader, lawgiver and Supreme Court of Appeal. Idolatry was to be mercilessly crushed out from amongst them; and, that this might be done effectively, the Canaanites were to be expelled from the land. Subsequent events showed the wisdom of this injunction, for the Canaanites, who were given up to polytheism and immorality, were only partially expelled, and through their influence the Hebrews fell again and again into apostasy, thus poisoning, by neglect of this command, their whole national life.

Politically the government was republican in form, somewhat comparable to that of the United States. The law was a written constitution, a federal and unalterable compact between the

tribes. Subject to this each tribe enjoyed independence, and was governed by its own head men—but all united for national defence, and they had generally a common president.

The Hebrews were never to forget that they were brethren; there must be no oppression and no hopeless poverty. The land was to be fairly divided, each family having its share. If a man fell upon evil times, he might pledge his land; if he were very poor, he might pledge himself or his children, and thus secure at least food and shelter; but periodically there was to be a jubilee, and land and freedom were to be restored.

Sanitary rules were laid down with an amount of detail which can only be appreciated when we remember the circumstances of the time, and the extraordinary precautions necessary to prevent the breaking out of disease, where so many were gathered together in a hot climate.

The injunctions with regard to punishment for crime were severe, and show that crimes of violence were prevalent amongst the Hebrews. The long servitude in Egypt, during which they had little or no status before the courts of justice, led to their taking the law into their own hand, and the vendetta was customary amongst them. The Mosaic law substituted judicial authority for private vengeance, and in the permanent settlement of the country, cities of refuge were provided to which one who had unwittingly slain another might flee from "the avenger of blood."

Much in the law was peculiarly tender and kind. The treatment of the poor was considerate. They might glean and gather here and there, and in so fertile a land as Canaan could scarcely

starve. Nor were the dumb animals forgotten. The ox was not to be muzzled as it trod the corn, but was to eat its fill; beasts of unequal strength were not to be yoked together; and in bird-nesting, if the young birds were taken the old were to be spared.

What could be more suggestive of humanity than the following?

"When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest, and thou shalt not glean thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger.

"Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, the wage of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God; I am the Lord.

"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour."

Whilst Moses was absent in the mount receiving the law, the people, fancying that he had either perished or abandoned them, became unmanageable, and forgetting Jehovah, slid back to the idolatry of Egypt. Aaron, unable to control, humoured them by letting them make and worship an image of gold, but in the midst of the degrading festival Moses returned. In fierce anger he called upon those who were on the Lord's side to rally round him, and when his own tribe, the tribe of Levi, obeyed the summons, he ordered them to do execution amongst the idola-

ters. The faithfulness of his tribe at this juncture was not forgotten; and, shortly after, when it became necessary to single out a tribe for the service of the sanctuary, Levi was chosen.

Though the service of the sanctuary was the primary work of the Levites, they had many other duties. As the Hebrews lived by agriculture, and had little time for more than daily routine, it was desirable that a certain number should be free for more liberal pursuits, and the tribe of Levi was utilised for this also. The Levites, therefore, were not only the priests but also the judges, scribes and registrars. From their ranks came the officials, from the highest to the lowest; the high priest and the superintendents of markets, the physician and the scavenger were alike Levites. An equitable arrangement was made for their remuneration. Though they did not as a tribe receive a specific inheritance when the country was divided, they were allotted certain cities for residence, and tithes and fees of various sorts. These must have amounted to a considerable sum, but when the expensive nature of the worship is considered, the Levites probably did not receive more than a fair equivalent for the absence of the landed property which the others enjoyed.

The law having been laid down and the people organised, they marched to Kadesh-Barnea, a city on the border of Canaan, whence deputies were sent from the tribes to reconnoitre. On their return, ten of the twelve who had been sent, though they reported favourably as regarded the land, declared that the inhabitants were too strong to be dispossessed, and only Caleb and Joshua

advised going forward. The people were panic-stricken, and refused to listen to the two brave men, who, indeed, narrowly escaped being stoned.

In judging the Hebrews it must be remembered that they had been in bondage for generations, that they were without military skill, largely without arms, and had only once seen war. With strong religious faith they might have surmounted even these difficulties, but they lacked faith also. Evidently they were not fit to face the conquest, and Moses declared that it must be deferred until a braver generation had arisen.

Dismayed at the alternative, the people now regretted their cowardice, and determined to attempt the invasion after all. In spite therefore of Moses' express prohibition, a number of them penetrated into Canaan, but they were defeated and driven back with great slaughter, after which they accepted the inevitable.

We do not know how long it was before they again advanced. The expression, "forty years," so often used in Scripture, means vaguely a good long while, and is rarely to be taken as a precise figure. But whatever the time may have been, it was not spent, as has been often imagined, in a barren desert, but in an open country, where the people found plenty of pasture for their flocks and lived in comfort until those whose spirit had been broken by Egyptian bondage had passed away, and a new and hardy generation had grown up amongst the mountains well fitted for the work which lay before them.

When the march towards the land of promise was resumed, of the three who had been chiefly instrumental in leading the people out of Egypt,

Aaron and Miriam were dead, Moses was old, and the leadership was passing into the hands of Joshua, his nominated successor.

In approaching Canaan for the second time it was determined to avoid the southern frontier, and to enter at the north end of the Dead Sea. The shortest way to reach this point was through the land of Edom, and Moses asked permission from the king of Edom to take this route, reminding him of the relationship which existed between the descendants of Jacob and Esau; but he refused, fearing to admit so vast a throng of people within his territory. Very reluctantly, therefore, the Hebrews had to retrace their steps and march round his borders, southward to Akaba, and then, turning northward again, approach the promised land.

Decisive contests with the Amorites and the king of Bashan soon made them masters of the eastern bank of the Jordan, and at last they pitched their camp in the plains of Moab over against Jericho. Balak, king of Moab, alarmed at the progress of the Hebrews and seeing no hope of successful resistance by arms, had recourse, after consultation with the Midianites, to supernatural agency. He sent for Balaam, a man from Pethor on the river Euphrates, who had a high reputation as a prophet, in the hope that his curses, if they did not bring a blight upon the Hebrews, might at any rate encourage his own warriors to resist them. Balaam came, induced by the reward offered, but, terrified by portents on his journey, he became the unwilling mouthpiece of the Spirit of God, and the curses which he had been hired to utter turned to blessings in

his mouth. His evil heart, however, suggested to him that if the Hebrews could be tempted to commit sin they would lose the favour of God, and he advised the Midianites to conquer them thus. The method succeeded only too well; but, disastrous as the result was to the Hebrews, the tempters also suffered, for a massacre of the tribes was ordered, and in the massacre Balaam fell.

The country on the eastern side of the Jordan being now conquered, the tribes of Reuben and Gad asked permission to settle there, and Moses agreed on condition that they should first help their brethren to conquer the land beyond. To this they willingly acceded, upon which the territory east of the Jordan was divided between them and the half tribe of Manasseh.

Moses was now aged, and the time approached when he must die. He found the Hebrews slaves: he had made them a free people, had given them laws, brought them to the boundary of the promised land and fitted them for its conquest. Before he passed away he appointed Joshua as his successor, and then gathering the people together he gave them his farewell blessing.

"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.

"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord."

After this Moses ascended to the top of Pisgah, where he had a wide and uninterrupted view of

the land which the Lord, in accordance with His covenant with Abraham, was about to bestow upon his seed. And from Pisgah, in solitary grandeur, this meekest of men, who nevertheless became the greatest of prophets, leaders and lawgivers, passed to his covenant-keeping God.

CHAPTER V

THE PROMISED LAND

JOSHUA, so long the lieutenant of Moses, now succeeded him as leader, and the people prepared to invade. They were encamped on the eastern side of the Jordan opposite Jericho, a city the reduction of which was clearly the first work to be done. The army accordingly crossed the Jordan as they had crossed the Egyptian Sea, dry shod The same kind of thing happened in the year A.D. 1267, when the waters of the Jordan, blocked by a landslip, ceased to flow long enough to permit of a bridge being repaired.

Jericho soon fell, and the way into Canaan lay open. The next effort, that against Ai, was not so fortunate, but the second attempt proved successful. The failure of the first attack was attributed to the wrong-doing of Achan, who had, against express command, secreted valuable spoil, including "a goodly Babylonish garment." This apparently trifling incident touches the history of Babylon in an interesting way. For centuries the fabrics of Babylon had been famous, her merchants having traded freely with Canaan before the days of Abraham. About the time of the

Exodus, Assyria was rising into power, and whilst Joshua was occupying Canaan, Babylon was being conquered by Assyria.

When encamped at Gilgal the Hebrews were outwitted by the Gibeonites, a neighbouring tribe, who induced them to make alliance by pretending that their territory lay a long way off. It is to the credit of the Hebrews that they held the treaty sacred after the fraud had been discovered.

The alliance with the Gibeonites hastened the conquest of Palestine in an unexpected way, for the princes of the south, led by Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, enraged because the Gibeonites had made treaty with the invaders, attacked them, and Joshua coming loyally to the help of his allies, routed the confederacy.

The manner in which this triumph is recorded has given rise to much discussion. Joshua is said to have prayed that the sun and the moon might stand still until the battle was finished, and his prayer was answered. The passage is a quotation from a collection of Hebrew poems called the *Book of Jashar*, and there is no need to contend for the literal interpretation of what is professedly poetry. Joshua undoubtedly prayed that the day might not close until the Hebrews had vanquished their enemies, his prayer was answered, and the victory is described in the daring imagery so common to Hebrew poetry.

The defeat of the southern princes alarmed those in the north, and another powerful confederation was formed against the Hebrews, but this also was overthrown at the waters of Merom.

The brunt of the fighting was now over, and the Hebrews had made good their footing in

Canaan, but the country was not wholly reduced, for many cities were still occupied by the Canaanites. It was not until the days of King David that the work was brought to a conclusion, when Jerusalem was added to the list of conquered cities and became the capital. The original inhabitants were never really thrust out —the Hebrews merely settled amongst them. Perhaps Moses made a mistake in allowing some of the Hebrews to dwell on the eastern side of the Jordan, for, had all come across, more room would have been necessary, and fewer of the inhabitants could have remained. Those who were left in Canaan were a curse to the Hebrews there, whilst the Hebrews who dwelt east of the Jordan lost their spirituality, and became little better than the heathen who surrounded them.

Amongst the cities captured by Joshua was Lachish, the site of which has been recently discovered. Amongst the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, letters have been found from the governors of Lachish to Pharaoh, written before the Exodus. Lachish was then an important stronghold in Southern Palestine, but the Hebrews destroyed it, and for many years it lay desolate.

Though the conquest of Canaan was still incomplete, the victories obtained by Joshua had given the Hebrews so firm a footing that he could allot to each tribe its portion, and the land was equitably distributed in proportion to the number of families.

It is interesting to notice how remarkably the way had been prepared for the Hebrews. At the time of the Exodus, Egypt was decaying and had lost all control in Asia, so that the Hebrews

were able to make good their escape in a way which would have been impossible even a few years earlier. Afterwards, when they were securely hidden in the mountains of Seir, Canaan was overrun by tribes who aimed at the conquest of Egypt, and Ramses III., in destroying these, himself invaded Canaan and reduced many of its cities. And finally, when the way had been thus cleared for the Hebrews and they were ready to take possession, the Egyptian monarchy once more fell into decay.

Joshua was now an old man, and his hour of departure was at hand. After the battle of Ai he had gathered the Hebrews together and read the law, the people responding in blessings and cursings from the slopes of Ebal and Gerizim. Now again in his last days he summoned the leaders, and after reminding them of the mercies which they had enjoyed, adjured them to serve the Lord, and the people, touched by his impressive words, made fair promises.

"The Lord our God will we serve, and unto His voice will we hearken."

For a time all went well. "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel."

CHAPTER VI

THE JUDGES

THE period of the Judges presents much chronological difficulty. Formerly it was assumed that the

persons mentioned ruled over the whole country, and, by adding their years of office together, the period stretched to more than three centuries, and the time of the Exodus was thrust back. It is now considered probable that the Exodus took place between 1250 and 1200, so that the time between the death of Joshua and the establishment of the monarchy could not have been more than a century and a half. The explanation is simple. After the death of Joshua there ceased to be a central authority. The tribes had settled in their allotted possessions, but the Canaanites were still in the land, and the condition of the Hebrews varied according to the circumstances of the locality. In some parts of the country they were all-powerful and lived in peace, in other parts they were amongst enemies more numerous than themselves. The result was frequent war, and from time to time, as the emergency arose, local leaders and deliverers appeared at the same time in different parts of the land.

The earliest serious trouble of the Hebrews was with a foreign foe. Scarcely was Joshua dead when Chushan-risha-thaim, king of Naharaim, a province on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, overran the country as far as the southern frontier of Palestine, with such effect that the Hebrews, as well as those whom they had dispossessed, were under his sway for eight years. From this enemy they were delivered by Othniel, and as he was the brother of Caleb we know that these events must have happened shortly after the occupation of Palestine.

After Othniel's death, Eglon, king of Moab, laid

the Hebrews under tribute for eighteen years, when he was assassinated by Ehud.

In the south there were many troubles with the Philistines, a hardy race of pirates from Crete. These had made common cause with the tribes, who, in the reign of Ramses III., had attempted to invade Egypt, and they had made good their footing on the mainland. They now occupied the southern coast of Canaan, holding the important cities of Ashdod, Askelon, Ekron, Gaza and Gath, and giving their name to the whole country. The Philistines were great fighters, and a sharp thorn in the side of the Hebrews—sallying from their strongholds on the coast, and raiding the districts where the Hebrews were settled. Doubtless their numbers were often replenished from Crete and other islands of the Mediterranean, and they were not finally vanquished until the reign of King David.

In the north the Canaanites under Jabin, king of Hazor, "mightily oppressed the Children of Israel."

> "Untrodden were the highways,
> Through the winding by-path stole the traveller;
> Upon the plains deserted lay the hamlets."

At last Deborah arose, a woman of rare determination of character. Perceiving that the time had come for striking a blow for freedom, she persuaded Barak, a brave man and popular leader, to put himself at the head of such of the people as assembled on Mount Tabor in answer to their summons.

Sisera, a confederate of Jabin and leader of the oppression, brought a great army to crush the

Hebrews, but in the battle which followed he was defeated and slain. The "Song of Deborah," composed in honour of this victory, is one of the most ancient and finest pieces of poetry extant.

After this the land had rest for a time, and then the Bedouin of Midian and Amalek swept it year after year, destroying the crops and driving the terrified people to the mountains and caves.

Gideon, a member of the tribe of Manasseh, now came forward, and the people rallied in considerable numbers to his standard. It was God's will, however, that the victory should be gained by a few, and the numbers were reduced until only 300 chosen warriors remained. With these Gideon made a night attack of a most striking character. Each man was provided with a trumpet and a clay pitcher held upside down to conceal a lighted torch. The camp was silently approached on three sides, and then at a given signal the trumpets were blown, the pitchers thrown on the ground, and the torches brandished aloft. The din of 300 trumpets, the shouts of the men and the flaring of the torches breaking suddenly upon the darkness and silence of the night, produced an extraordinary panic. The Arab horses dashed about in terror, the tribes fled or fell upon one another in wild confusion, and, utterly routed, were pursued and cut to pieces by the rest of Gideon's army. This victory made such an impression upon the Hebrews that they offered Gideon the title of king, but he refused, subordinating personal ambition to a sense of what was due to the sovereignty of Jehovah: "I will

not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."

After Gideon's death, however, Abimelech, one of his sons, seized the crown and was at first supported by the men of Shechem, but they soon tired of him. He was slain, and thus ended the first attempt to establish monarchy amongst the Hebrews.

The next leader of importance was Jephthah, a Gileadite, who was victorious over the Ammonites. Before sallying forth he rashly vowed that if he returned victorious he would sacrifice whatsoever came out of his house to meet him. The first to meet him was his daughter.

Samson, of the tribe of Dan, was the next national hero, a man in whom strength and weakness, wisdom and folly, were strangely blended. After giving the Philistines abundant trouble, he fell a victim to the wiles of a woman, and at length, blinded and an object of sport to his captors, he died, but not ingloriously.

There dwelt at Shiloh in Ephraim a priest named Eli, in whose hands there was something like a concentration of civil and religious authority. Eli ruled well, but he was aged, and his sons who acted under him were licentious and corrupt. During one of the wars with the Philistines the Hebrews carried the ark with them into the battle, hoping thus to ensure God's presence on their side. His favour being denied, they were defeated, the sons of Eli were slain, the ark taken; and when Eli heard the terrible news the shock killed him.

The case of the Israelites now appeared desperate, for they were defeated, and apparently

abandoned by God, so that nothing seemed left for them but unconditional surrender, yet at that moment of hopelessness their country was nearing the period of its greatest splendour.

When Eli died, there was in the temple a boy of eight years of age named Samuel. He had already received proofs of God's favour, though his early memories were necessarily associated with the terrible defeat of his countrymen and the capture of the ark of the Lord. The Philistines, finding that the presence of the ark brought disaster, soon returned the sacred symbol, but nevertheless continued to tyrannise over the Hebrews. They were disarmed, and, lest new weapons should be made, the smiths' shops were closed, so that if a Hebrew wanted his plough mended he must go to a Philistine smithy. As Samuel grew older he had a great and wholesome influence over the people, and a national reformation was set on foot. The centre for religious gatherings had hitherto been at Shiloh, but as this city was destroyed, and the ark was at Kirjath-jearim, Samuel gathered the people to Mizpeh for such public worship as was possible under the reign of terror. On one occasion during worship the Hebrews were attacked by the Philistines, but, encouraged by a thunderstorm which beat in the face of their enemies, they turned upon them and were victorious, pursuing them for a considerable distance. This unexpected defeat and the attendant circumstances impressed the Philistines, and they did not again attack Mizpeh.

It now became evident to the Hebrews that there could be no real improvement in the country

without a change in the method of government. Samuel did his best, and his character was without reproach, but he was no warrior, and the people saw that they must have a military leader as king. Accordingly an assembly was held, and a monarchy having been decided on, the choice of king was left to Samuel. His choice fell upon Saul, a man possessed of many kingly qualities, who soon showed his worth. The Ammonites were besieging Jabesh Gilead, and the citizens, at their last extremity, pleaded for help. Saul summoned the people, and marched against the Ammonites, defeating them and saving the city, after which the wisdom of Samuel's choice was acknowledged, and Saul was accepted loyally as king. The inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead never forgot what they owed to him, and years after, when he and his sons had been slain on Mount Gilboa, and their bodies had been nailed to the walls of Bethshan, the men of Jabesh Gilead arose by night, took down the bodies, and gave them respectful burial.

TABLE OF THE KINGS.

1. THE FOUNDERS OF THE EMPIRE.

Saul *circa* 1020.
David *circa* 1000.
Solomon *circa* 960.

2. THE DIVIDED MONARCHY.

JUDAH.		ISRAEL.	
932	Rehoboam.	Jeroboam I. . .	932
915	Abijam.		
912	Asa.	Nadab . . .	910
		Baasha . . .	908
		Elah . . .	884
		Zimri . . .	882
		Omri . . .	882
871	Jehoshaphat.	Ahab . . .	874
		Ahaziah . . .	852
		Joram . . .	850
846	Jehoram.		
842	Ahaziah.		
842	Athaliah.	Jehu . . .	842
837	Joash.		
		Jehoahaz . . .	814
797	Amaziah.	Jehoash . . .	798
		Jeroboam II. . .	783
768	Uzziah.		
		Zechariah . .	742
		Shallum . . .	741
		Menahem . .	741
736	Jotham.		
734	Ahaz.	Pekahiah . .	737
		Pekah . . .	736
727	Hezekiah.	Hoshea . . .	730
		Samaria captured and kingdom ended by Sargon . . .	722
697	Manasseh.		
642	Amon.		
640	Josiah.		
608	Jehoahaz.		
608	Jehoiakim.		
597	Jehoiachin.		
597	Zedekiah.		
588	Jerusalem captured and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.		

Based upon Sayce, *Early Israel*, 1899.

CHAPTER VII

SAUL

WHEN Saul ascended the throne he was no longer young, for his son Jonathan had grown to manhood. The prowess displayed by the king at Jabesh Gilead, and the feats of arms performed by Jonathan, so alarmed the Philistines that they gathered in great numbers to battle, whilst Saul's best efforts could raise but a handful of men. Jonathan's courage, however, delivered the Hebrews from an apparently hopeless position. Climbing with his armour-bearer into a Philistine stronghold and taking them by surprise, he slew about twenty men and created a panic amongst the rest. Saul perceived the confusion from the Hebrew camp, and quickly crossing fell upon the enemy, who fled precipitately. This success so emboldened the Hebrews that many who, either from despair or compulsion, had gone over to the side of the Philistines, now returned to their allegiance.

The king took advantage of this enthusiasm to subdue the Amalekites, who, since the Hebrews entered Canaan, had scarcely ceased from harassing them, dashing in from the desert on horses and camels and ravaging the land—the Hebrews, from lack of cavalry, being at their mercy. Saul determined to destroy the hornets' nest, and at the head of a powerful force chased the Amalekites to their desert homes, and from fastness to fastness so vigorously that they ceased for a long time to give trouble.

Saul's reputation was now well established, and it might have been expected that he would reign prosperously. But for various reasons he was not a success. Samuel did not act kindly towards him, doubtless regarding him with jealousy, and Saul was hindered rather than helped by the priesthood. Beside this there was a strangeness about him which increased as he grew older. There were times when he was morose even to madness, and there may have been insanity in his family. Yet there was much in him to command admiration. He continued to live his simple life, he built no palaces, nor were his people oppressed that he might have greater glory. And we cannot forget that with all his faults he retained to the end the affection of his son Jonathan, one of the noblest heroes of Hebrew history.

As time went on the irrepressible Philistines again invaded Judah, encamping on one side of the valley of Elah whilst the Hebrews lay on the other. There was in the army of the Philistines a man of huge stature, named Goliath, who advanced from the ranks daily and challenged any Hebrew to single combat. When for several days none had been found willing to face him, a young Bethlehemite volunteered—David, the son of Jesse. Though the ruddy youth had only a sling, his chances were better than might at first sight appear, for the eastern sling is often made on the principle of the bow, and has at short range such precision that a marksman can bring down a bird on the wing. On the other hand Goliath's weapons were only of use at close quarters, and the heaviness of his armour, pre-

venting rapid movement, made David's task comparatively easy. After mutual defiance in true Oriental fashion, David rushed forward, and Goliath fell with a pebble in his brain. This unexpected termination of the duel filled the Hebrews with valour and the Philistines with dismay, and the latter were chased to the gates of Ekron.

After this feat David became a member of Saul's bodyguard, and later one of his generals and his son-in-law. But the popularity of the young hero with the people vexed the king, and during his fits of depression he sought his life. David, despairing of winning back his confidence, fled, and after sheltering for a time amongst the Philistines took to the mountains and dwelt in the caves of Adullam, near Bethlehem, where his boyhood had been spent. Here he was joined by his relatives and by men who were in trouble, until at last he had 600 outlaws under his command.

Poor Saul went from bad to worse. He massacred eighty-five priests because Ahimelech the priest had succoured David on his flight. He chased David on the mountains so recklessly that his own life lay twice at David's mercy. Yet every now and then the king's better nature asserted itself, and Jonathan's conduct was always noble.

At length the end drew near. The Philistines combined to make a supreme effort and mustered in force on the southern slope of Gilboa—the Hebrews pitching their camp a few miles away. A presentiment of evil took hold of Saul. Samuel was dead, the priests had deserted him, and he

could obtain no sign from God, so he resorted to witchcraft in his despair. Accompanied, tradition says, by Abner and Amasa, he went by night to a supposed witch at Endor, and learned that on the morrow he must die.

Next day a terrible battle was fought. The Hebrews were routed, Saul's sons fell fighting valiantly around their father, and the king himself, sorely wounded and in imminent risk of capture, fell upon his sword—his faithful armour-bearer following his example and dying at his side.

Meanwhile David had passed through a strange experience. Hopeless of permanent success against Saul he had offered his services to Achish, the Philistine king, who had gladly given him and his followers an honourable place in the army and the city of Ziklag for residence. When Achish marched against Saul, David and his band went as auxiliaries, and would doubtless have fought had they been permitted, although we may be sure that Saul and his sons would have been sacred in their sight. David was, however, saved from this unpatriotic position by the Philistine chiefs, who, dreading lest he might turn upon them on the field of battle, persuaded Achish to send him back.

When David reached Ziklag he found that it had been raided by the Amalekites and burned to the ground, all the women having been carried away captive. A mutiny arose amongst the desperate men and they talked of stoning David, but he pacified them, and they started in pursuit. By good fortune they found an Egyptian slave who, having fallen ill on the road, had been left at the wayside by his master to perish. With his

guidance the Bedouin were overtaken and surprised in the midst of revelry, so that no resistance was possible; and with the exception of 400 young men, who fled upon camels, all were slain. The captives and spoil were recovered and much besides, for the storming of Ziklag had only been the final incident in the Amalekite raid.

Two days after David's return to Ziklag he heard the sad news about the battle of Gilboa. The intelligence was brought to him by an Amalekite who pretended that he himself had slain Saul, thinking that the information would gratify David and ensure a reward. But David was too noble to feel anything but horror that an Amalekite should dare to lay violent hands upon the anointed king of Israel, and this man's story cost him his life.

"The Song of the Bow," with which David commemorated the sad ending of Saul and Jonathan, is amongst the most touching of elegies.

Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
How are the mighty fallen!

. . . . . .

Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

. . . . . .

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

. . . . . .

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!

CHAPTER VIII

DAVID

DAVID was now the most suitable king for the Hebrews. True, Saul had left a son, Esh-Baal, but he was a man of little capacity, and in early times kingship did not pass by primogeniture—the best man in the royal house being generally chosen. David was the king's son-in-law, a national hero, and captain of an armed force, and when he marched to Hebron he was at once chosen as king by the tribe of Judah. But the rest of the tribes clave to the house of Saul, and a stand was made on behalf of Esh-Baal (Ish-bosheth) by Abner, Saul's commander-in-chief, who with the remnant of the army had escaped across Jordan. A long war ensued, but David was surrounded by mighty men on whose faithfulness he could implicitly rely, and his power increased daily whilst that of Esh-Baal waned. At last Abner quarrelled with his master, and endeavoured to come to terms with David, offering to bring over all Israel to him on condition of being made commander-in-chief. But Joab, David's nephew, who filled that post, assassinated Abner, and Esh-Baal was slain by his own servants not long after.

There remained now of Saul's house only Merib-Baal (Mephibosheth), the son of Jonathan, a cripple; and there was no longer any reason why the tribes which had not already come in should refuse to accept David's sovereignty. Accordingly Esh-Baal's supporters assembled at

Hebron and David was crowned king of all Israel.

This new aspect of affairs alarmed the Philistines, and they determined to attack David before he could gather strength. The attack was successful and David had to take to the mountains and hide once more in the caves which had served as a refuge from Saul. He carried on a guerilla warfare against the Philistines, gradually becoming more powerful until he felt strong enough to attack them in the field. Soon he was victorious, and, having driven them from Hebrew territory, he carried the war into Philistia itself, persevering until they were so fully subjugated that they acknowledged him as suzerain, the best of their warriors taking service in his body-guard.

About this time David besieged Jerusalem which, though an ancient city, had never been conquered by the Hebrews. It stood in the centre of the country, an impregnable Jebusite stronghold, threatening the unity of the kingdom. David resolved to capture it, but his summons to surrender was received with scornful taunts. Such was the strength of the fortress that the Jebusites boasted if only the blind and the lame remained to defend it, it would be safe. Notwithstanding its strength, however, it was captured, and from that time Jerusalem became the metropolis. Its position was superb. It was 2500 feet above sea level, central yet secluded, reached only by steep paths and easily-guarded passes. Though often besieged it always offered a stout resistance; and in the end had usually to be taken by bribery or stratagem. David built a palace for himself at

Jerusalem, and would gladly have built a temple there, desiring that the city should be not only the political but also the religious centre for the nation. But this laudable design was prevented by Nathan, the prophet, who told him that God had reserved for his son the honour of building the holy shrine.

David accordingly had to content himself with amassing material and treasure on a vast scale in order that his son's task might be facilitated.

As he was not allowed to build the temple, David prepared a pavilion for the ark (which had remained at Kirjath-jearim since its restoration by the Philistines in the days of Samuel), and brought it to Jerusalem amidst much rejoicing.

David was a poet and a musician of the highest order: he organised the worship of the sanctuary, and laid the foundation of the magnificent service of praise which was afterwards more fully developed when the temple was built by Solomon. It is interesting to reflect how much our religious service of to-day owes to this poet king.

David was successful against all his foreign enemies, bringing Philistines, Moabites and Ammonites under his sway. Moreover, when Syria and Damascus joined issue against him, although the war was prolonged, he was eventually successful — his garrisons being placed in Damascus and other northern towns, until all Syria, as far as the Euphrates, acknowledged his rule.

In the kingdom thus united and triumphant, wealth increased, commerce flourished, and prosperity and contentment reigned.

Unfortunately, in the evening of life, David had to pass under a cloud. He committed gross sin, and, although he repented, the sin brought its penalty. He destroyed the home of another, and a blight fell upon his own. Amnon, his eldest son, wronged Absalom and was slain by him, and Absalom himself, his favourite son, banished, recalled and forgiven, at last basely rebelled. So popular was Absalom and so widespread the conspiracy against David that he fled with such as remained faithful to him across the Jordan. Fortunately Joab and other chief men stood firm, and Absalom weakly deferring attack until he had made a levy of the people, the king's friends had time to rally to his defence. In the hour of adversity David gave many signs of the true greatness of spirit which characterised him. When the priests would have brought the ark with them in the retreat he bade them carry it back to its accustomed place.

"If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and its habitation: but if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him."

When Shimei cursed him and threw stones at him, David would not suffer him to be touched.

"The Lord hath said unto him, curse David."

At last Absalom's levy was gathered and the armies joined battle. The rebel army was undisciplined and David had no anxiety about the result of the battle: all his anxiety was that his son's life should be spared. "Deal gently for my sake," he said, "with the young man." In spite of this pathetic injunction Joab slew Absalom,

and though the action may have seemed politic, it was really cruel, and robbed David of all the joy of victory.

"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

David could now return to Jerusalem without fear, but the manner of his returning raised dissension amongst the tribes. The elders of Judah came out to meet him, and the throng which brought him back was chiefly representative of Judah. The other tribes resented the action of Judah in thus forestalling them, bitter words passed, and Sheba, a Benjamite, headed another revolt. To make matters worse, David, exasperated with Joab for the death of Absalom, had superseded him and made Amasa, a less competent warrior, commander-in-chief. The army refused to follow Amasa, and Joab killed him and resumed his position—David not daring again to thrust him aside. Sheba's rebellion was now easily subdued, but Joab, in spite of his splendid services, had a terrible account to render for the slaughter of Abner, Absalom and Amasa.

In David's last years his kingdom was firmly established, and he had rest from his enemies. His life had been very chequered and he grew old before his time, but his worst troubles had been those of his own making.

He had chosen Solomon as his successor, and had chosen wisely, but towards the end of his reign Adonijah, an elder son, tried to seize the sceptre and was supported by Joab and Abiathar. David heard of the conspiracy in time and ordered

that Solomon should be immediately crowned, after which Adonijah's following melted away.

At last the great monarch passed to his rest. In his youth he had been the darling of the people, and in his riper years had done invaluable service to his country. Under Moses the Hebrews became a people, under Saul a nation, under David an empire. Many things might be said in his disparagement. The veracity of the sacred historian is testified by the impartiality with which he records the evil as well as the good. David was very human, and when tried by prosperity he was found wanting. Nevertheless with all his imperfections and even crimes, he often lived at a high spiritual level, and was a true servant of God. Whether we judge his sacred songs as regards their sublimity of language or loftiness of thought, they transcend all other sacred poetry, and their strains will never cease to vibrate in the human heart. Amongst Hebrews David stands second to Moses, but amongst men whose careers have inspired and whose words have drawn humanity Godward King David stands second to none.

CHAPTER IX

SOLOMON

SOLOMON, the son of Bathsheba, was twenty years old when he began to reign. The time of his accession was fortunate for a lover of peace Babylon, Assyria and Egypt were weak, the surrounding peoples had been subdued by David,

and no power was strong enough to dispute Solomon's supremacy. He was, therefore, at leisure to enjoy the magnificent inheritance which his father had bequeathed, to enlarge and embellish the capital, and to carry out the construction of the temple, the great task upon which his father had set his heart.

In this work he had the invaluable aid of Hiram, king of Tyre, a young man whose admiration for David was unbounded. The Hebrews were a simple agricultural people, possessing little artistic skill, while Hiram had among his Phœnician subjects highly-trained artificers, the best of whom were willingly placed at Solomon's disposal. Much of the material of the temple also came from Hiram's dominions, and in exchange for the labour and material thus ungrudgingly supplied, Solomon sent agricultural produce to Phœnicia.

It was determined to build the temple on Mount Moriah, a most imposing site, but one which entailed immense outlay in building up foundations from the valley, before enough area could be provided for the temple and courts. The precise design of the temple can only be guessed at, for the Bible is not explicit, and Josephus in his description mingles features from each of the three temples together.

The outer court, the part used for public ceremonies, was large. The temple proper was small, but exquisitely built, and covered with plates of gold, which flashed in the sunlight and could be seen by approaching pilgrims when they were yet a long way off. The doors were of cedar, the curtains of fine linen dyed in bright colours and richly embroidered. Inside was

the Holy Place, and within it the Holy of Holies.

In the outer court stood the brazen altar of sacrifice and the molten sea also of brass, forty-five feet in circumference, supported on twelve brazen oxen and provided with every appliance for the ablution of the priests.

The temple took seven years in building, every detail was perfect, and no expense was spared.

When finished, it was dedicated with a solemn festival which lasted for two weeks and drew a vast concourse from all parts of the country. From this time Jerusalem became the religious centre of the Jewish state, and the temple the one spot towards which every true Hebrew turned with longing eyes.

Solomon's building operations did not end with the temple. Jerusalem was fortified, magnificent palaces built, and the water and drainage works, so necessary in a city periodically crowded with visitors at the great feasts, were not forgotten.

In his early days Solomon paid close attention to the business of government and the country was well organised, being divided in Oriental fashion into provinces, over each of which a governor was placed who was responsible for taxes and internal administration. Solomon's alliance with Hiram was very advantageous to the nation. The Phœnicians were indefatigable traders and splendid seamen, whilst the Hebrews were almost without maritime experience. A trading partnership was therefore entered into between the kings, each having something to offer. Hiram had the port of Tyre with abund-

ance of ships and seamen. Solomon had access to the Red Sea, controlled the caravan routes, and governed a country excellently situated as an emporium for trade between the three continents. Moreover, David had left vast wealth, and though much of it had been spent unproductively, some of it was still available for trading. Accordingly the mercantile fleets of the young kings sailed far and wide—to India, to the Zambesi and to Spain; from every side produce was gathered and the fame of Solomon resounded through the Oriental world.

Nor was Solomon's reputation based upon wealth and commerce alone, for he had a fertile mind and an amount of knowledge which places him in the front rank, whether we speak of him as a poet, as an author of wise sayings, or as a naturalist, for "he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes."

Yet with all this wealth and all his wisdom Solomon's career was unhappy. The temptations that beset a king found in him an easy victim. His harem was on an unprecedented scale, and his wives, many of them heathen, stole his heart from God. As he grew older he became lax in religious matters, freely permitted idolatrous worship within his realm, and allowed the hills surrounding Jerusalem to be consecrated to heathen deities.

Towards the end of his reign his popularity waned. So long as anything remained of the store which David had accumulated, all went well, but when that was gone and money had to

be found for the maintenance of gorgeous palaces and innumerable retainers, taxation became oppressive and the people discontented. It seems probable that the incidence of the taxes fell chiefly upon the northern tribes, and that Judah and Benjamin were lightly dealt with, if they did not escape taxation altogether, a state of things which must have seemed the more intolerable as the money was not spent where it was raised, but mainly for the benefit and glorification of the metropolis.

At length the discontent of the northern tribes found utterance through Ahijah and Jeroboam—the former being a prophet, the latter a man who had attracted the attention of Solomon by his ability and diligence at fortification work. These plotted against the king, but the plot was discovered and Jeroboam fled to Egypt.

Now Solomon had married an Egyptian princess, and had been for a time on excellent terms with Egypt, but the dynasty into which he had married had been overthrown, and Shishak who now reigned had no favour for Solomon and was delighted to foment rebellion against him. Jeroboam was therefore well received and remained in Egypt biding his time.

Nor was it from the side of Egypt only that trouble loomed. Hadad, the Edomite, revolted and carried on a guerilla warfare, attacking the trade caravans that passed between Palestine and the Red Sea. Worse still, Rezon had founded a new kingdom in Damascus destined in later years to bring much trouble to the Hebrews. David and Joab would have given these troublesome spirits short shrift, but Solomon was no warrior,

and was more solicitous of present ease than of the future prosperity of his kingdom.

At last he died, not much over fifty, having reigned about thirty years.

Solomon had marvellous chances. He succeeded to a wide empire, a great reputation and untold wealth. At first, moreover, he ran well, but the temptations incident to prosperity mastered him, and he spent his later years in sensuous indulgence. When he died, prematurely worn out, he left behind him an empty treasury, a rebellious people, and an empire ready to fall to pieces at the slightest touch.

The book of Ecclesiastes furnishes a melancholy commentary upon a life which began in glorious brightness and ended almost in despair. Yet the teaching of that book is pure and good, and if, as seems probable, Solomon wrote it towards the end of his life, it shows that at the last his heart came back to its early allegiance.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

CHAPTER X

A DIVIDED EMPIRE

THERE is a glamour surrounding the name of Solomon which makes it hard to realise that during his later years his government was oppressive. The building of the temple was legitimate, especially as King David had made

so much preparation for it, but the temple only inflamed Solomon's desire to build, and many pretexts were found for copying the example of the average Oriental monarch and wasting the resources of the country in senseless display. The consequence was that before his death discontent had arisen on every hand. Judah indeed showed no inclination to revolt, for she was loyal to the family from which she had gained so much material benefit, and through whom she had been raised to political supremacy; but the benefit and the uplifting had been at the expense of the northern tribes, and these became jealous and discontented. Jeroboam, who had conspired with Ahijah during Solomon's life and had been forced to fly to Egypt, now returned and became the mouthpiece of the disaffected.

Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was at once accepted as king by Judah, but it was necessary that he should obtain the allegiance of the northern tribes, and he called an assembly together at Shechem for that purpose. The tribes seem to have had at first no desire to rebel, but hoped that the young king would be easily persuaded to right their grievances, which were certainly weighty.

"Thy father made our yolk grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."

Rehoboam should have answered so reasonable a petition without hesitation and with cordiality, but instead he took three days for its consideration and then answered like a fool. The young aristocrats by whom he was surrounded advised

him to make no compromise, and he took their advice. The result was disastrous.

"What portion have we in David? neither inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David."

Rehoboam doubted the seriousness of the revolt and sent an agent to collect the taxes as usual, but it cost the unfortunate man his life; and the king, fearing for his own safety, fled to Jerusalem.

The northern tribes now chose Jeroboam as their king, and thus by Rehoboam's folly the empire, which had been built up by David and had gained such dignity and glory from Solomon, was in a moment, and as it proved finally, dissolved.

Judging superficially it seemed as if Jeroboam ruling over ten tribes must be stronger than Rehoboam ruling over two, but Jeroboam had many difficulties to face. Though a capable man and likely to be a good ruler, his family lacked prestige, and it remained to be seen how long those who had made him king in a moment of enthusiasm would stand by him. Rehoboam had certainly shown himself most indiscreet, yet the memories that clustered round David and Solomon kept Judah faithful to their dynasty to the end. The kings of Israel never reached this enviable position. Their tenure of office depended on their individual prowess and on the faithfulness of their officers, and this often proved but a bruised reed, for out of nineteen kings who ruled over Israel eight were assassinated, and the dynasty was changed continually. Moreover, in comparing the relative strength of Judah and

Israel, it must be remembered that Judah was homogeneous, encircling an almost impregnable capital of which all Hebrews were proud. The kingdom of Israel had as yet no rallying point; it consisted of tribes, widely scattered and strangers to each other, having only the temporary bond of union caused by the knowledge of a common grievance. Judah's greatest advantage, however, lay in the possession of the national sanctuary. It is true that the temple had not yet gained the prominence which it acquired later, nevertheless a practice had begun of going up to Jerusalem at the feasts, and Jeroboam saw that if this continued his position would be endangered. Accordingly he established sanctuaries at Dan for the northern tribes, at Bethel for the tribes of the east and centre. In this there was no sin, for God had laid down no law restricting worship to Jerusalem. The temple worship was indeed comparatively modern, and until lately Shiloh had been more sacred than Jerusalem. But there was great sin in setting up calves of gold as symbols of Jehovah, and for this Jeroboam was justly condemned.

Rehoboam did not mean to relinquish his hold upon Israel without a struggle, and on his return to Jerusalem he levied an army, but was dissuaded by a prophet from making war. In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, led his forces against Jerusalem. Possibly he did so at the request of Jeroboam, but this is not certain, as the record of the subsequent campaign which is engraved on the temple at Karnak contains amongst the names of conquered towns those of towns belonging to the northern

kingdom. This does not prove much, however, for possibly these cities had refused to own Jeroboam as king, or their names may have been entered because Jeroboam in asking aid had acknowledged Egyptian suzerainty. In any case Judah suffered most, and Jerusalem above all. Shishak's army entered Judæa in three columns, and Rehoboam, quite unable to cope with him, ransomed his capital by emptying his treasury and stripping the temple. Shishak marched victoriously throughout the country, and after plundering 130 cities, many of which cannot have been more than mere villages, returned to Egypt with much spoil and great glory.

Shishak died soon after this invasion, and for a while the kingdoms of Judah and Israel had rest from foreign foes, but between themselves there was no peace. Wherever borders marched there was fighting and raiding, while cattle-lifting, massacre and burning never ceased.

Rehoboam reigned for seventeen years and was succeeded by Abijam, his son. The latter lost no time in attacking Jeroboam whom he defeated with great loss, capturing the city of Bethel. Abijam only reigned two years and was followed by his son, Asa, who reigned forty-one years. About the same time Jeroboam also died and was succeeded by Nadab, who after reigning three years was assassinated by Baasha, his captain. Baasha became king with the support of the army, and attacked Judah vigorously, regaining all Jeroboam had lost, and so pressing Asa that he besought succour from Benhadad, king of Damascus.

Damascus was conquered by David, but in

Solomon's time regained its independence through the energy of Rezon, and after the break-up of the Hebrew empire became once more a city of importance. Benhadad accordingly invaded Israel at Asa's entreaty, and quickly compelled Baasha to make terms and cease from troubling Judah.

Elah succeeded Baasha but was slain by Zimri, one of his captains, who hoped probably for the support of the soldiery, but he had overestimated his strength, for the army would have none of him and elected Omri, their general, as king. Omri marched on Tirzah where Zimri dwelt, and the wretch, despairing of success, set fire to the palace and perished in its ruins.

At first Omri had a rival named Tibni, who was followed by half the tribes, and civil war raged in Israel for four years, but Tibni died, and Omri was accepted as king by all. He proved a capable monarch, and his reign has this added interest that it is mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions. So important indeed did the Assyrians consider him that they spoke of Israelitish kings as being of the house of Omri even after the dynasty was extinct. And in an inscription of the reign of Shalmaneser II. when Jehu is described he is termed "Jehu the son of Omri," although it was Jehu himself who had exterminated the family.

Omri's rule was prosperous. Relations between Israel and Judah were friendly during his reign; he conquered Moab, imposing on it a heavy tribute in sheep and wool, and gave Israel a capital. Hitherto the kings of Israel had not ventured to found a metropolitan city, but had

lived at Shechem, Penuel and Tirzah, but Omri picked out an eligible site and founded Samaria, fortifying it and building in it a palace and a temple, so that the Israelites had now a rallying point. Omri even ventured to cross swords with Benhadad, but was unsuccessful and had to make peace by surrendering cities in Gilead, and by setting apart a quarter in the city of Samaria where the Damascene merchants might trade.

It may have been Omri's want of success against Benhadad that led him to make alliance with Ethbaal, king of Sidon, marrying Ahab his son to Jezebel, the Sidonian princess.

Whilst these changes were going on in Israel the throne of Judah had been occupied by Asa, who became king of Judah shortly before the death of Jeroboam, king of Israel.

He was an excellent prince who favoured religion and discouraged idolatry with so much zeal that he even deposed Maachah, the queen dowager, from her position of supremacy in the royal household because of her idolatrous practices.

The result of Asa's excellent rule was speedily seen in an improved national tone. The army was strengthened and the cities fortified, and such was the spirit of the people that Asa shook off the yoke which Shishak had imposed on Rehoboam and re-established Judæan independence. The Egyptians did not submit to the loss of Judæa without an effort, and invaded Southern Judæa, but Asa encountered them with such determination that they were defeated and did not trouble Judah again until the reign of Josiah.

It was strange that although Asa had been so successful against Egypt, he was afraid to stand alone against Israel, and had to ask help from Benhadad, who defeated Baasha as has been already mentioned.

CHAPTER XI

THE DAYS OF ELIJAH

AHAB, the son of Omri, was now king in Israel—his wife being Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon. Ahab had a bad name, but was not utterly abandoned. Theoretically, at any rate, he clung to the worship of Jehovah, and showed a certain regard for His servants; but his alliance with Jezebel, the Sidonian princess, was a cause of misery in Israel. Yet it is not fair to judge even Jezebel harshly. True she was cruel and unscrupulous enough, but we must remember that she had been trained as an idolater and surrounded in her father's palace by obsequious priests, so that she failed to understand either the spiritual worship of Jehovah or the rugged independence of his prophets. Her influence was, however, malign throughout. To gratify her, many innovations were made and idolatrous practices tolerated — temples being built in honour of Baal, and Jehovah's followers persecuted and even slain at her instigation.

At this period a new class of religious teachers had arisen amongst the prophets—men not necessarily endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the

prophetic office but devoted to the service of God, preaching, prayer and the study of the Scriptures. They were not celibates, for the wives of the sons of the prophets are spoken of, but they seem to have lived in communities, and they were divided into schools, each showing reverence to a superior.

Though some of these prophets temporised, the majority stood up valiantly against Jezebel for the worship of Jehovah, and earnestly opposed the idolatrous practices which were being introduced under her patronage. Filled with wrath the queen determined to root out the worship of Jehovah altogether; and as a preliminary, massacred many of his prophets.

At this critical moment Elijah appeared upon the scene. Of his origin we know nothing, and only a few incidents of his life have come down to us, yet he has left a unique impression on history. He seems to have been a man of imposing presence, and he first appears entering, apparently unsummoned, into the presence of Ahab to announce the approach of a great drought as a punishment from God for the national apostasy. Having fulfilled this mission he disappeared from Ahab's presence as suddenly as he had come.

During the period of drought Elijah lived in seclusion at Sarepta, actually within the territory of Ethbaal, Jezebel's father. In the third year of drought Ahab, now greatly alarmed, went through the land with Obadiah, his chief minister, to see what measures could be adopted to save the cattle from destruction. On the way Elijah met him, and challenged him to test the

merits of the rival faiths. Ahab accepted the challenge, and next day, amidst a huge concourse of the people, Elijah faced with undaunted spirit 400 Phœnician priests. At his suggestion the prophets of Baal built an altar and laid a sacrifice thereon, but though they cried to their god all day, no fire came from heaven to consume it. When their efforts were evidently in vain, Elijah built his altar, and, when he had solemnly appealed to Jehovah for a response, fire at once flashed from heaven. The astonished people acknowledged the hand of God, and at Elijah's bidding the Phœnician prophets were slain, after which the drought ceased and abundant rain descended upon the land.

The massacre of the priests of Baal naturally enough exasperated Jezebel to madness, and she sent a threatening message to Elijah, who fled to Horeb despairing of life. Soon, however, his spirit was soothed by a vision of God, and he was ordered to return and to anoint Jehu as king of Israel, Hazael as king of Syria, and Elisha as successor to himself.

Once again he appeared before Ahab, after Jezebel had murdered Naboth and stolen his vineyard, to warn him of the doom overshadowing his house. The king showed that he was not entirely reprobate, for his pride broke down, he put on sackcloth, and the fierceness of God's anger was for the moment turned away.

Ahab was a warlike king. He kept Moab in subjection and Judah in check, and held his own against Damascus. Benhadad II. was now king there, and although he had not the ability of Benhadad I. he had considerable power. For

some reason war arose between Damascus and Israel, and the Syrians laid siege to Samaria with so powerful an army that surrender was imminent. But being over-confident they became neglectful, and the garrison made a fortunate sortie and defeated them. This victory so encouraged the Israelites that when, next year, Benhadad resumed hostilities, they again defeated him and even made him prisoner, though Ahab, somewhat unwisely, set him free.

The reign of Ahab has a special interest arising from the fact that during it Israel came into contact with Assyria. This ancient power had been for a long time under a cloud, but was now embarking on a fresh career of conquest, and a monolith of Shalmaneser II. tells us that in a great battle fought by him at Karkar 10,000 men belonging to Ahab of Israel took part. Benhadad II. was chief of the confederacy of which Ahab was a member; and, although Shalmaneser claimed the victory, the Assyrians suffered so severely that their advance was stayed.

The reign of Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, over Judah was parallel with that of Ahab over Israel. Jehoshaphat reigned well and his kingdom prospered, but he made a mistake in marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, for alliance with such a family could only be productive of evil. It is possible that at this time Judah acknowledged Ahab as suzerain; at all events Jehoshaphat paid him a visit, and was persuaded to help him in an endeavour to wrest Ramoth-gilead from the Syrians. The battle was most disastrous to the con-

federates, for Jehoshaphat narrowly escaped with his life and Ahab was slain.

Ahaziah succeeded Ahab, but died within two years from an accident, and was succeeded by his brother Joram. After Ahab's death the king of Moab had ceased to pay tribute, and Joram persuaded the kings of Judah and Edom to join him in a successful raid upon his revolted vassal.

Elisha, the successor of Elijah, comes into prominence just now with a fame only second to that of his master. His reputation, indeed, spread beyond the borders of Israel, and he was visited by Naaman, a Syrian general, whom he was instrumental in curing of leprosy. But this did not prevent Syria from warring against Israel, and Samaria was again so closely invested that capitulation seemed inevitable, when an inexplicable panic arose amongst the Syrians and they fled.

Afterwards Elisha travelled as far as Damascus, and Benhadad II., hearing of his proximity, and being sick, sent Hazael, his leading officer, to ask the prophet if he would recover from his sickness. Elisha looking on Hazael fixedly said that the disease was not mortal, yet the king would die, and by his answer and manner Hazael perceived that Elisha had read his heart and knew that he had determined to murder his master. Elisha's prediction was fulfilled—Hazael returned to Damascus, assassinated the king and seized the throne.

During the reign of Jehoshaphat over Judah the kingdom enjoyed some prosperity. Legal reforms were introduced, the country fortified and commerce advanced. The king even went

so far as to build a fleet for the purpose of trading on the Red Sea, but it was wrecked.

Jehoshaphat was succeeded by Jehoram, who reigned during a few stormy years. His wife Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, had an evil influence over him, and the worship of Baal was established in Judah as it had already been in Israel. Many misfortunes followed this departure from God. First Edom revolted and Jehoram lost access to the Red Sea, after which the Arabians invaded Judæa, stormed and plundered the royal palace, and carried many away captive.

Jehoram died soon after, and was succeeded by Ahaziah, who reigned one eventful year over Judah. Ahaziah joined forces with Joram, king of Israel, in an attack upon Hazael, king of Damascus, for the purpose of recovering Ramoth-gilead. The battle went against the allies and Joram was carried wounded to Jezreel. Here Ahaziah visited him, and during the visit a revolt was raised against the wounded king by Jehu, his chief captain, who was crowned by the army and marched upon Jezreel. Joram, unaware of the revolution, but hearing of Jehu's approach, rose from his sick bed, and in company with Ahaziah, his guest, went out to meet Jehu, and asked him if the war was ended. The first words of his revolted captain undeceived him, and turning in flight, he was shot in the back, Ahaziah also being overtaken and slain.

Jehu now entered Jezreel in triumph, but Jezebel, the mother of the slain king, had yet to be reckoned with. Hearing the news and knowing what her end must be, she met it as

befitted a queen. Dressed in her royal robes, with her hair adorned and her eyes painted in Eastern fashion, she sat on a balcony and as Jehu rode past hurled defiance at him:—

"Welcome to Zimri, the murderer of his master."

When Jehu raised his head and shouted: "Who is on my side?" two or three attendants looked out, and he cried: "Throw her down." He was instantly obeyed by her time-serving followers, and the queen was crushed to death under horses' hoofs and chariot-wheels. Afterwards, when feasting, he bade his servants bury her, "for she was a king's daughter," but they found only a few bones—the rest had been devoured by pariah dogs and jackals.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST DAYS OF ISRAEL

HAVING begun thus, Jehu made a clean sweep of Ahab's family, and added a massacre of the priests of Baal, but it was less religious zeal than political expediency that prompted the murders, for Jehu was himself an idolater at heart and little better than the men he slew.

Meanwhile Judah also had seen its tragedy. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah and daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, heard that her son was slain, rather than that any one else should come between her and the throne she slew all the seed royal. Only one escaped,

Joash, who was snatched from the cradle by his aunt, the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest, and reared secretly in the temple. When he was seven years of age, Athaliah's reign having now become obnoxious to the people, Jehoiada summoned the priests and chief men to the temple and exhibited Joash who was eagerly accepted as king. Athaliah, ignorant of what had transpired, but hearing the acclamations of the people entered the temple, then perceiving her danger fled, but was overtaken and slain.

Joash was but a child when he began to reign, and so long as Jehoiada lived was wisely guided, but after this priest's death he fell off lamentably, and when Zechariah, Jehoiada's son, remonstrated and warned him of the fate which must overtake him if he forsook God, Joash had him murdered, in spite of all the kindness which his father had shown.

At this time Hazael was king of Damascus, and during the reign of Jehoahaz, who had succeeded Jehu as king of Israel, he had subdued Israel and robbed it of some of its fairest provinces. Hazael then turned southward, and having captured Gath made as if he would attack Jerusalem. Joash, who was not a warlike king, bought him off with the treasures of the temple and the palace, but he did not long survive the disgrace, for a conspiracy was formed against him and he was murdered in the fortress of Millo—Amaziah his son reigning in his stead.

During the long reign of Joash in Judah, three kings had reigned in Israel: Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash. The last named, who succeeded just

before the death of Joash, king of Judah, encouraged by Elisha, then upon his death-bed, attacked the Syrians, and defeated them. Amaziah, the son of Joash, was also warlike, and, when he had conquered the Edomites, he rashly determined to cross swords with the king of Israel. But Jehoash was too strong for him, his army was routed, Jerusalem pillaged, the temple sacked, and the king himself captured. He was released, but shortly after was assassinated and succeeded by Uzziah his son. Uzziah proved a capable monarch, and reigned prosperously. He fortified Jerusalem and other cities of Judah, and built towers of defence throughout the country. He also encouraged the arts of peace—advancing agriculture by irrigation. Unfortunately, in the middle of his reign, he was smitten with leprosy, and had to depute the active duties of kingship to Jotham his son.

During this period both Judah and Israel were prosperous. Joash, the warlike king of Israel who defeated Amaziah, had been succeeded by Jeroboam II., under whom Israel regained something of its old position—its power extending across Jordan once more. This was partly owing to the weakness of Damascus, Israel's great rival, which had been subjugated by Assyria.

During the reign of Jeroboam II. Jonah is mentioned for the first time, and we are thus doubly reminded of the great power which had arisen in the east. Jonah's visit to Nineveh, however, occurred somewhat later, during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III.

After Jeroboam's death Israel fell into a state

of anarchy, and two kings, Zechariah and Shallum, were murdered in quick succession.

Menahem followed, during whose reign Pul invaded Israel, and Menahem had to buy him off with 1000 talents of silver. The identity of Pul, the first Assyrian monarch mentioned in the Bible, was long a mystery, but it is now clear that he was none other than Tiglath-Pileser III. This king was a usurper and adopted the name of Tiglath-Pileser in Nineveh, but continued to be known widely by his original name of Pul.

Menahem was succeeded by Pekahiah his son, but after two years there was a mutiny, and Pekahiah was slain by Pekah, his chief captain, who succeeded him.

Ahaz, called Jeho-ahaz by the Assyrians, who was now upon the throne of Judah, was a weak king, and Pekah and Rezon of Damascus formed a coalition against him. They attacked Ahaz separately and both were successful—the king of Syria carrying many captives to Damascus. Pekah also defeated Judah and was carrying away prisoners in similar fashion when the misery of the Jews so aroused the non-military part of the Israelites that they turned upon the soldiers, compelled them to relinquish their prisoners, and sent them back clothed and fed—a bright incident in a somewhat gloomy history.

The tyranny of Pekah and Rezon had an effect they little contemplated, for Ahaz in despair sought help from Tiglath-Pileser III., and the great Assyrian came to the rescue. It was too late to prevent the calamities which had already overtaken Judah, but they were terribly avenged. Damascus was crushed, her king slain, her people

carried into exile. Israel fared no better, several of her provinces were added to Assyria, their inhabitants, especially those who lived beyond Jordan, were deported and the country made a desert. Pekah, now reduced to the position of a petty chief, was slain by Hoshea, who succeeded him, reigning as vassal of the Assyrian king.

At last the death of Tiglath-Pileser encouraged the subject peoples to strike a blow for freedom and Hoshea rebelled like the rest. Shalmaneser IV. now attacked Palestine, and Hoshea at first bought him off with money and fair promises, but when it afterwards came to the knowledge of Shalmaneser that he was intriguing with Egypt, he again invaded Palestine and carried the king into captivity. The inhabitants of Samaria, however, held out bravely, and whilst the city was being besieged there was a military revolution at Nineveh, and Sargon succeeded to the Assyrian throne. Samaria fell soon after the accession of Sargon, and he took the leading Israelites into captivity. They were carried "into Assyria and placed in Halah, and in Habor the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes," whilst their places were filled by men "from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath and from Sepharvaim."

Probably the poorest of the Israelites remained at home, intermarrying with the exiles who had been sent amongst them, but from this time the identity of the ten tribes was lost and the northern kingdom of Israel came to an end.

There has been much speculation in modern times concerning "the lost tribes," and curious theories have been started, but there is no mystery

about the matter. Sargon carried away a certain number of the people, and probably a greater portion remained. Of those who remained some merged with the older Canaanite population amongst whom they dwelt; others with the foreign colonists who were sent from other parts of the Assyrian empire—for it is to be remarked that the fiercely exclusive spirit which abhorred mixed marriages did not arise until after the captivity. Some of those who were left doubtless kept their identity until the return of their friends from the captivity, when they reunited with them. Again, of those who were carried into exile some mingled with the surrounding inhabitants; others returned at Cyrus' invitation with their brethren of the house of Judah; whilst many remained whose descendants are to be found scattered over Asia to this day. The idea that the ten tribes are to be looked for as a homogeneous race in any particular country is fanciful. They have never been lost in any other sense than the Huguenots were lost when they took refuge in England, or the Germans are lost when they emigrate to America.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SOLE MONARCHY OF JUDAH

THE appeal for help made by Ahaz to Assyria had resulted in the destruction of both Israel and Damascus, and Judah was for the moment freed from anxiety. But the relief had been obtained at a great price, for now that there were

no buffer states between Nineveh and Judah, the Assyrians looked covetously at Jerusalem, the strongly-fortified city lying so temptingly on the road to Egypt. Isaiah, who flourished in the successive reigns between Uzziah and Hezekiah, advised Ahaz not to seek help from Assyria, but when the mischief was done and Judah became tributary, he tried to avert the danger of absorption by preserving a pacific policy in foreign affairs.

Partly because her frontier was less accessible to foreign foes, and partly because her people were loyal to the descendants of the kings to whom they owed their greatness, the kingdom of Judah had enjoyed more stable government than that of Israel; so that, whilst in Israel there had been many dynasties, on the throne of Judah, in spite of both assassination and revolution, David's family still reigned. This had tended to better administration in civil affairs, but in religious matters there had been little difference between the kingdoms, both Jew and Israelite being about equally ready to worship strange gods. Indeed, the reaction against the worship of Baal had begun in Israel, and the great prophets, Elijah and Elisha were Israelites. On the whole, however, Judah had better kings than Israel, and Hezekiah, who now succeeded Ahaz, was one of the best. During his reign there was a marked improvement in the national tone: he ruled justly, eradicated idolatry, and recovered some of the territory which Ahaz had lost.

Sargon had succeeded to the throne of Assyria and was endeavouring to restore the Empire of Tiglath-Pileser, which had almost gone to pieces

under Shalmaneser IV. On every side the subject states were fighting for independence, and Merodach-baladan, a Babylonian hero, sent an embassy to Hezekiah, ostensibly to congratulate him on recovery from sickness, but really to concert measures for a general revolt. Hezekiah foolishly listened to the Babylonian envoys, but next year Sargon overran Judah and the king had to submit—ransoming Jerusalem by the payment of a heavy fine.

A few years later, Sargon having been assassinated, the accession of Sennacherib was the signal for fresh revolts in the Assyrian empire, and once more Hezekiah joined the rebellion. Sennacherib accepted the challenge and marched westward, but avoiding Judah for the moment turned down the coast of Phœnicia, besieging and capturing many cities and receiving tribute and homage from the rest. He got as near the frontier of Egypt as Ekron, and the Egyptians sent a relieving force to the city, but were defeated at Eltekeh and Ekron fell.

As Hezekiah still held out, Sennacherib now turned upon Judah, captured many cities and so pressed Jerusalem that the king was again compelled to ransom his capital. Sennacherib was content not to interfere further with Hezekiah just then, for he was besieging Lachish and intended thereafter to invade Egypt, whose army, defeated and dispirited, was gloomily watching him from the other side of the frontier. At length Lachish fell, and Sennacherib, fearing to leave a stronghold like Jerusalem unsubdued in his rear, sent first an influential embassy and then a haughty letter demanding unconditional surrender. Hezekiah

in despair might have yielded, but Isaiah still lived and with his masterful spirit urged the king to refuse compliance, assuring him that Sennacherib would not be permitted to carry out his threats.

"The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

"Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

"Therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."

The idea of putting a hook in the nose was no figure of speech to an Assyrian, for they frequently dealt with their captives after this fashion.

The prediction was accomplished, though we scarcely know how. Sennacherib was close to the Egyptian border when a terrible catastrophe overtook his army, possibly a sudden and virulent visitation of the plague, a disease to which Orientals quickly succumb. However this may be the invasion abruptly ceased, and the king hastily retreated to his own country—never venturing to attack Judah again, although he lived for years after this event.

Hezekiah was succeeded by Manasseh, who reigned for over fifty years. During the first part of his reign he governed disgracefully, undoing the good which his father had done. Human sacrifices were offered, and there was bitter religious persecution, in the course of which Isaiah was slain. At length Manasseh's misgovernment

attracted the attention of Assyria, and Esarhaddon, invading Judah, carried the king to Babylon in chains. The fact, related in Scripture, that Manasseh was taken to Babylon instead of Nineveh has been a trouble to critics. It appears, however, that Esarhaddon, being anxious to win the affections of his Babylonian subjects, resided in their capital for half the year, so that captives would be brought to Nineveh or Babylon according to circumstances.

Manasseh had leisure to reflect whilst in prison; and, repenting of his evil deeds, was restored to his kingdom and ruled well for the rest of his life.

Amon succeeded him and did evil like his father, but without his father's repentance. After a short reign he was assassinated.

Josiah his son succeeded at the age of eight, and reigned prosperously for thirty years. His prosperity was partly due to the fact that Assyria had fallen upon evil times. In the last years of the reign of her great king, Assurbani-pal, enemies had arisen on all sides, and in the short reigns of his two successors the empire came utterly to grief.

The weakness of Assyria during Josiah's reign enabled him to win back for Judah some remnant of her former glory, and provinces which had been riven from her, even as far back as the days of Rehoboam, were again united to the kingdom.

A copy of the Book of the Law was found in the temple, and Josiah, shocked to see how far his subjects had departed from its precepts, endeavoured to promote a religious reformation. He was fortunate in having good counsellors, amongst whom was Jeremiah, now rising into notice.

The Scythian hordes wereat this time overrunning Western Asia, but though they penetrated as far as Ascalon, where Psamatik, the king of Egypt, met them and bribed them to turn back, Judæa escaped their notice.

Assyria had, however, suffered terribly, and before she could recover from her prostration her enemies were upon her. Pharaoh Necho, the son of Psamatik, either on his own account or having joined the alliance of the Medes and Babylonians against Assyria, advanced on Carchemish. The Egyptian army marched northward by the coast without opposition, but when it turned to cross Palestine, Josiah, drawing out his forces in defence of his suzerain, gave battle, and was defeated and slain. His death was a great blow to the Jewish state.

The people crowned Jehoahaz, but in three months Necho, who now claimed the suzerainty, deposed him and made Jehoiakim king in his stead.

CHAPTER XIV

BY BABEL'S STREAMS

THE Jews would probably have done well enough under the suzerainty of Necho, but unfortunately his tenure of power in Asia was destined to be brief. After the fall of Nineveh the Assyrian empire was divided, the northern portion going to Cyaxares, king of the Medes, the southern to Nabopolassar, king of Babylon. If, as is possible, Necho was a confederate, the western portion of

the empire should have been left to him, but a quarrel was picked almost immediately by Nabopolassar, and Nebuchadrezzar his son attacked Necho at Carchemish and utterly defeated him, driving his army headlong back to Egypt.

The suzerainty of Judah now passed to Babylon; and Jehoiakim, as Necho's nominee, was not likely to be a favourite. Nevertheless he kept peace for three years with Nebuchadrezzar, the reigning monarch. At the end of that time he revolted, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrances of Jeremiah, who saw in his insensate conduct the doom of the kingdom. Matters turned out as Jeremiah had foreseen. Judæa fell quickly under the feet of Nebuchadrezzar, Jehoiakim was carried in chains to Babylon, and Jehoiachin his son was appointed in his stead. The trial of Jehoiachin was, however, brief. He was as bad a ruler as any that had gone before, and after a few months Nebuchadrezzar came up and besieged Jerusalem. Jehoiachin quickly surrendered and was carried with his "princes, and all the mighty men of valour, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths" to Babylon, none remaining "save the poorest sort of the people of the land." Amongst the captives taken to Babylon at this time were Daniel and his companions.

Nebuchadrezzar, having removed all whom he considered likely to revolt, now gave Jerusalem another chance, appointing Zedekiah, the uncle of Jehoiachin, and youngest son of Josiah, as king over the impoverished remnant. One would have thought that the experience of the past would have sufficed, yet with incredible folly, and in spite of Jeremiah's earnest remonstrances,

Zedekiah, after being quiet for nine years, began plotting with Egypt, first with Psamatik II., and afterwards with Apries, the Pharaoh Hophra of Scripture.

Nebuchadrezzar lost patience utterly, and once more laid siege to Jerusalem. The siege lasted for two years, and the sufferings of the Jews were terrible. At length, all hope having fled, Zedekiah escaped by night, hoping to reach Arabia, but was captured and brought to Riblah, where Nebuchadrezzar had his headquarters. After his children had been slain in his presence, Zedekiah was blinded and led in chains to Babylon, whilst Jerusalem with its palaces and temple was plundered and destroyed.

There were now two kings of Judah in prison in Babylon, Zedekiah and Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim being dead. Zedekiah also died, but Jehoiachin survived Nebuchadrezzar and was released from prison by his son and successor, Evil-Merodach.

Jeremiah, who had opposed Zedekiah's rebellion and been treated with great cruelty on that account, was invited to Babylon, but would not leave Jerusalem. Over the handful who remained as vine-dressers and husbandmen, Gedaliah, Jeremiah's friend, was left as governor, but he was assassinated by fugitive soldiers who were now returning under the command of Ishmael, one of the seed royal. Gedaliah's supporters rallied after his death and drove Ishmael from Jerusalem, but fearing lest Nebuchadrezzar might return and treat innocent and guilty alike, most of the Jews fled to Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them. Concerning the

fate of Jeremiah there are various traditions—one being that he escaped to Babylon, another that he was killed by the king of Egypt, a third that he was murdered by his own countrymen.

When Sargon brought the kingdom of Israel to an end and carried the inhabitants away captive, he scattered them widely, but Nebuchadrezzar did not thus treat the exiles of Judah, who seem to have settled mostly in the neighbourhood of Babylon, dwelling not as slaves but as colonists. As they acquired property and prospered greatly, many of them preferred to remain in Babylonia when their brethren returned to Judæa after the captivity. Generally speaking also, they had religious freedom, though at times they suffered persecution.

The writings of Daniel and Ezekiel teem with allusions to things seen in Babylon, and the strange symbolic creatures which they describe are taken from Babylonian imagery.

Whilst many of the exiles were content with their lot, the more patriotic looked longingly back to their native land, and some of the psalms speak plaintively of this period. Babylonia presented a striking contrast to the mountainous country of Judah, for it was quite flat and interspersed with rivers and canals, along the banks of which polled willows grew, just as in the fen countries of our own land. All this was new to the exiles, and they pathetically sang:—

"By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps,

For there they that led us captive required of us songs,
And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land?"

Amongst the exiles the most distinguished was Daniel. He and his friends were educated with care in Babylon, and although their faithfulness to God brought them into trouble at times, in the main they were well treated and highly esteemed. Daniel became a satrap of the empire, and the respect in which he was held is testified by the fact that he served several monarchs in succession.

During the captivity the exiles never lost hope. Jeremiah had limited the period to seventy years, and both Isaiah and he had spoken of a time when Jerusalem should be restored and Babylon herself should sit in the dust. For this the exiles waited, and as they waited, the balance of power slowly shifted, until Cyrus, king of Elam, having conquered Astyages, became king also of the Medes and Persians, and with a great force marched on Babylon. The elaborate account of the siege of Babylon, mentioned by the classical writers as belonging to the reign of Cyrus, really refers to a later reign. An inscription of Cyrus himself declares that after one pitched battle, first Sippara and then Babylon opened their gates to his army without fighting, and it is not unlikely that the Jews and other exiles dwelling in Babylonia at the time helped to bring about the result. At all events Cyrus, whether out of gratitude or from policy, in the very first year of his reign, issued an edict authorising all exiles who desired it to return to their homes. Amongst those who

availed themselves of the opportunity were many Jews, who were evidently in great favour and were encouraged not only to return to Judæa but to rebuild their temple.

The migration of the Jewish exiles was directed by Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the former being a descendant of David, the latter hereditary high priest. The number of exiles mentioned as having returned is 42,000, but as these may have been heads of families, the total, including women and children, might be 200,000. Those who preferred to remain in Babylonia helped the expedition with gifts, and Cyrus kindly restored such of the vessels of the temple as were still in existence.

CHAPTER XV

THE RESTORATION

THE journey of so great a company must have been tedious, but at length it was over and "the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem." The foundations of the temple were laid with rejoicing, but the work was wearisome and often interrupted. The surrounding tribes—mixed people, with a mixed religion—coveted a share in the honour of building the temple, and when their offers were rejected with apparently needless scorn, they became bitter enemies. From that time they "weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them

to frustrate their purpose." Thus several years were wasted, a period embracing the latter part of the reign of Cyrus and the whole of the reign of his son, Cambyses.

On the accession of Darius Hystaspis to the throne of Persia a new departure was made; and when the Samaritans again interfered, Darius confirmed the decree of Cyrus, and ordered that every assistance should be given to the Jews in their work. From this time the building made rapid progress, and at last the second temple was finished and dedicated. The last five Psalms are believed to have been written for this ceremony.

During the half century which followed the dedication of the temple very important events transpired. Darius invaded Europe and attacked Greece with disastrous results; and when, after his death, Xerxes again invaded Greece, the consequences were fatal to Persian prestige. Xerxes was the Ahasuerus of Scripture, and the feasting spoken of in Esther happened in the third year of his reign, when he was receiving the governors from the various provinces of his empire, and arranging the details of the contemplated expedition. The events in which Haman played a part happened later—when the king had returned discomfited and was living at Susa.

The fact that only a small number of the Jews returned to their native country is verified by this striking story. The rest of them were scattered widely over the Persian empire, and Haman, out of a grudge against Mordecai, determined to destroy them and to enrich himself with their spoil. He managed to get the consent of Xerxes, concealing from him the full extent of his project

and blinding his eyes with a promise to pay 10,000 talents of silver into the royal treasury. The design was frustrated by the wisdom of Mordecai and the devotion of Esther, and Haman was condemned to death. "Had we been sold for slaves, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage, but we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish."

The story of Esther is full of those historical side-lights which so strikingly confirm the Scriptures. From that day to this the anniversary of the great deliverance has been observed by the Jewish people. At the Feast of Purim when the Book of Esther is read, all sexes and ages being present, at the name of Haman the congregation clap their hands and stamp with their feet, crying: "Let his memory perish."

Xerxes was succeeded by his son Artaxerxes I., whose reign was favourable to the Jews. Artaxerxes appointed Ezra, a man of priestly descent, to be governor of Judæa, and in going up from Babylon the new governor took with him many priests and Levites and large offerings of silver and gold. Ezra found that the religious zeal of the preceding emigrants had spent itself; as after rebuilding the temple they had settled down comfortably amongst their neighbours and had become very lax in their ways. He checked this laxity, forbade mixed marriages and insisted on a hard line of separation, and from this time a spirit of rigid exclusiveness gradually took possession of the Jews.

From the time of Ezra's reforms until the twentieth year of Artaxerxes we have no record;

but in that year the king appointed Nehemiah governor of Judæa, and sent him to Jerusalem with a commission to rebuild its walls and fortifications. How far the Persian king was influenced by a desire to favour the Jews, and how far he acted from political motives we cannot say. Persia was weak now, and it suited her to have a friendly fortress in Palestine, nor did the Jews betray the confidence of their benefactors for they remained faithful to Persia to the end.

Nehemiah had many difficulties to overcome. The day had gone by when the decree of the great king was received with unquestioning loyalty by the outlying peoples, and the workers had to build with weapons at hand. Nor were Nehemiah's troubles over when the work of building had been accomplished. There was much misery among the people; many had fallen into debt and been compelled to mortgage their land, and even to sell their children to their richer brethren. Nehemiah compelled restitution, and in so doing made enemies who even attempted to murder him. As his appointment was temporary he returned after a time to the Persian court, but was reappointed, and returning to Jerusalem was able still further to prosecute his civil and religious reforms.

Shortly after his return to Jerusalem an incident occurred which proved in the end of much consequence. Manasseh, a priest of high rank, was expelled from Jerusalem for refusing to separate from his Samaritan wife—the daughter of Sanballat, the Horonite. The result was the building of the rival temple on Mount Gerizim

and the organisation of the Samaritan church and worship after the Jewish model. Up to this time the Samaritans had been willing to have fellowship with the Jews, but now the temple on Gerizim was their symbol of independence and the communities ceased to have intercourse.

Artaxerxes, the patron of Ezra and Nehemiah, died after a reign of forty years. Ezra died during Nehemiah's first term of office, and after Nehemiah's death Jewish history is for a long time almost a blank. During the early part of this period the Persian power sank rapidly. There were wars on every side and Judæa must occasionally have suffered, but for the most part it seems to have been neglected by the combatants.

At length Persia was invaded by Alexander the Great. The fidelity of the Jews to their Persian benefactors drew upon them his resentment and he advanced upon Jerusalem, but the high priest met him with submissive words and disarmed his enmity. When he died and his empire was divided, Palestine fell into the hands of Laomedon. Somewhat later Ptolemy seized it, his general, Nicanor, capturing Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day, the defenders offering no resistance. Ptolemy favoured the Jews and persuaded many of them to settle in Egypt, where, during the reigns of the early kings of his dynasty, they were well treated and prospered. After this Judæa changed hands several times, being now under the rule of the Ptolemies and now under the Syro-Grecian dynasty of Antioch, but the suzerain left the government very much in the hands of the high priest. Unfortunately there was much civil contention between the members

of the Jewish nobility, and the priesthood became merely a means of aggrandisement.

Antiochus Epiphanes, a violent and unscrupulous man, now succeeded to the throne of Syria. Angry at something the Jews had done or left undone, he determined to make their subjugation a reality, and accordingly captured Jerusalem and massacred many of its citizens. Not content with this he fell upon the city a second time, demolished its fortifications and built a citadel on the mound called Millo or Acra to overawe the inhabitants. Perceiving how entirely Jewish religion and nationality were bound together he determined to Hellenise the people and root out their faith. Accordingly he desecrated every part of the temple, and laid an interdict on the worship of Jehovah throughout Judæa. Heathen altars were erected in the provincial towns, and horrible cruelties perpetrated on those who refused to conform—many, both in the capital and provinces, suffering martyrdom. Yet though some were bribed and some terrorised into heathenism, the majority stood firm. At first there was no thought of armed resistance, the people fled and Jerusalem was deserted. Some went to Egypt, while many hid themselves in the caves and fastnesses with which Judæa abounded.

CHAPTER XVI

JUDAS MACCABÆUS

For a time it seemed as if the policy of Antiochus was to triumph. In Jerusalem there was a strong Hellenist party, and of the orthodox minority most either yielded to coercion or left the capital. In the provinces, however, the work was not so easy. The simple-minded villagers clung with tenacity to the customs and beliefs of their forefathers, and were encouraged in their resistance to the king's edicts by the faithful men who had fled from Jerusalem rather than conform to heathenism. Amongst these was an aged priest Mattathias, who with five sons, all grown to manhood, had left the capital and was living at Modin—a village on the main road from Jerusalem to Lydda. His family traced its descent from Aaron, and derived the name of Hasmonean from Hasmon, the great-grandfather of Mattathias. When the commissioner came to Modin to enforce the edict, he tried to bribe Mattathias, but the old man slew the first Jew who dared to sacrifice on the idolatrous altar which had been erected, and then falling upon the commissioner slew him also. He and his sons then drove the Greeks out of the village, tore down every vestige of idolatry, and took to the mountains where they were soon joined by the most daring of their countrymen. The names of the sons of Mattathias were Johanan, Simon, Judas Maccabæus, Eleazar and Jonathan, and each was brave and talented in his own way, but the ablest was Judas, who soon found himself

at the head of a band of resolute men and became more powerful every day.

At length Apollonius, the governor of Samaria, determined to crush the patriots, and advanced with a local levy, but was defeated and slain. This brought matters under the notice of Antiochus himself, and he, thinking to make short work of the rebellion, sent regular troops under Seron, the governor of Cœle-Syria. Judas had but a handful in comparison, but he chose a position where he had advantage of ground, and falling suddenly upon the enemy defeated them utterly.

Antiochus, who had departed on a campaign to the east, had left Lysias as regent and guardian of his son, and he now took the field with 50,000 men. The vanguard of the army, numbering 8000, was under the command of Gorgias, who attempted to surprise Judas by advancing rapidly with 5000 men, leaving 3000 to guard his camp. Judas was apprised of his approach, and instead of waiting for him, adroitly slipped past, and when Gorgias returned, weary with his vain search upon the mountains, it was to find his camp in flames, whereupon his men, panic-stricken, fled without striking a blow. The extraordinary success of Judas drew many to his standard, and when Lysias came up more carefully with the main body of his army, he also suffered defeat.

After these disasters Lysias left Judæa alone for a time, and Judas recovered Jerusalem and the adjacent country, though the Tower of Millo, which dominated the city, remained in Syrian hands. As Judas could not capture this tower, he blockaded it; and then, having purified and

reconsecrated the temple, arranged for the resumption of its sacred services.

Nor was Judas content with the recovery of Jerusalem. The Jews were widely scattered and greatly at the mercy of the heathen, especially in the provinces across Jordan, and Judas made several daring expeditions for their protection and relief. Meanwhile Antiochus Epiphanes died, and was succeeded by Antiochus V. (Eupator), his second son—Demetrius, the heir, being a hostage at Rome. Lysias now made another effort to conquer the Jews, and the size of his army, and the elephants by which it was accompanied, so alarmed the followers of Judas that they fell back upon the capital. Fortunately for them trouble at home made it impossible for Lysias to follow up his advantage, and a peace was made with Judas by which religious freedom was secured to the nation.

Next year Demetrius escaped from Rome, and having after a successful revolution slain both Lysias and his younger brother, he continued to harass the Jews until Judas, despairing of permanently holding his own against so great a power as Syria, sent ambassadors to Rome to crave protection. The ambassadors were favourably received, and a treaty was entered into, but before the embassy returned, Judæa had been again invaded and a battle fought at Elasa in which Judas Maccabæus was slain.

It is scarcely possible to speak too highly of this brave leader, who deservedly occupies a first place amongst national heroes. Fortunately after his death much of his work remained, for religious freedom was not interfered with after

the convention with Lysias, and the struggle for national independence which still went on was of secondary importance.

Jonathan was chosen in succession to Judas, and remained leader for eighteen years. Though not a hero after the type of his brother, he was an excellent diplomatist; and as there were rival claimants to the throne of Antioch, he contrived by playing off one against the other to gain many advantages for his country. At last, however, he was treacherously taken and slain.

The great family was not yet extinct, and Simon, the eldest, and in administration the ablest of the brothers, succeeded to the leadership. Simon, who was a calm and prudent man, set himself to consolidate that which had been acquired, securing the frontier by fortresses, gaining at last the fortress which had galled Jerusalem for so long a time, fortifying Joppa and renewing the league with Rome. The Roman Senate sent letters to their provinces announcing that they had taken the Jews under their protection, and the fact that it was thought necessary to send these to Syria, Pergamus, Cappadocia, Parthia, Sparta, Sicyon, Delos, Crete, Samos, Cos, Rhodes, Myndus, Cnidus, Lycia, Pamphylia, Cyprus, Phœnicia and Cyrene shows how widely the Jews were scattered abroad.

For a time the Jewish nation was practically independent, enjoying immunity from tribute and coining its own money, but Simon was assassinated, Antiochus Sidetes invaded Judæa, and Syria once more became suzerain. A few years later Antiochus fell in an expedition against the Parthians, and John Hyrcanus, the son of Simon,

succeeded him, governing so well that Judæa recovered something of her earlier prosperity. Samaria and Idumea were subdued, the temple at Gerizim destroyed, the country freed from tribute, and the area of its possessions so enlarged that it seemed as if a Hebrew monarchy might again be established.

But party spirit ran very high amongst the Jews, and prevented that consolidation which is essential to success. They were divided into two great sections, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, in their form something akin to the parties which have been found in so many countries—the Puritan and the Cavalier, the men of intense religious zeal and the men who chiefly desire to eat, drink and be merry.

The Maccabees and their followers were Pharisees—heroism and religious enthusiasm being inseparably blended in their characters. Unfortunately religion may degenerate into formalism, and men who have gained freedom for themselves are not always keenly anxious that it should be enjoyed by others. Hence, it came to pass, that as time went on and the early heroes passed away, prosperity tried the people more than adversity, and there came to be much partizanship and little religious feeling in their divisions.

John Hyrcanus was a Pharisee by birth, but in his later days a coldness had sprung up between him and his party, and he had leaned towards the Sadducees. His immediate successors, Aristobulus and Alexander Jannæus, broke with the Pharisees entirely, and for some years there was bitter civil strife. After Alexander's death his

widow declared her allegiance to the Pharisees, and was so well supported by them that she ruled prosperously for nine years. When she died the leading men in the state were Hyrcanus II., who had been made high priest during her life, and succeeded to the civil power at her death; Aristobulus, his brother, an active and ambitious man; and Antipater, an Idumæan, Hyrcanus' confidential friend and prime minister. Hyrcanus had little ambition and would gladly have made way for Aristobulus, but Antipater, who was practically ruler, persuaded him to maintain his position by arms, and civil war went on until Rome interfered between the rivals, and Pompey captured Jerusalem after a three months' siege. The Roman general treated the Jews with lenity, and, except that he offended them by personally inspecting the Holy of Holies, spared their religious feelings. He placed Hyrcanus upon the throne as friend and ally of the Roman people, and sent Aristobulus to Rome a prisoner. After a time Aristobulus escaped and raised an insurrection, but was captured by Gabinius and sent back to Rome. Gabinius tried the effect of decentralisation upon the Jewish state, depriving the high priest of supreme power and vesting it in five independent oligarchic councils, sitting at Jerusalem, Jericho, Gadara, Amathus and Sepphoris, but such an arrangement was not likely to last, and it does not seem to have lessened the feeling of national unity amongst the people.

The civil war in the Roman empire between Cæsar and Pompey had now broken out; and Antipater, acting nominally for Hyrcanus but

really for himself, at first espoused the cause of Pompey, but after the battle of Pharsalus went over to Cæsar's side and gave him invaluable aid when he was in peril at Alexandria. Cæsar did not forget this; and, when his own position was secure, he appointed Antipater procurator of Judæa—Hyrcanus remaining high priest.

The position of the Jewish nation was now greatly improved, the oligarchies were abolished, various conquests restored, and the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt. Antipater, who continued in favour at Rome, appointed his elder son to the government of Jerusalem, his younger son Herod he made governor of Galilee. Herod was a man of daring and decision, and on occasions showed qualities worthy of kingship, but the circumstances which surrounded him brought out the worst side of his character.

The rule of Antipater, his father, had been advantageous to the Jews, but they could not forget that he had gained power at the expense of their favourite Maccabæan family, and their attitude towards Herod showed hostility up to the limits of prudence. The Sanhedrin crossed swords with him when he was a young man, calling him to account for the arbitrary execution of a robber chief, but the defiant manner in which he treated them made them glad to let him go.

At last Antipater was murdered, and the power fell into the hands of Phasael and Herod. Against these Antigonus, the Maccabæan heir, contended, and so successfully that Phasael committed suicide, whilst Herod fled to Rome. There, however, he won Antony's friendship; and shortly after, when Judæa was rent by dissension between

the various parties, Antony cut the knot by sending Herod back to Jerusalem as king.

CHAPTER XVII

HEROD

HAVING the title of king and the support of Rome, Herod soon surmounted opposition and set himself to consolidate his power. He reorganised the Sanhedrin, slew forty-five leading opponents, and put his own supporters in high places. He abolished the life tenure of the high priests' office, and brought it under the secular power. The Sadducees, who had been his leading opponents, were reduced to insignificance; but the Pharisees, who had opposed the union of the high priesthood and the civil power in one person, gained influence. Herod's greatest danger arose from the rivalry of the Maccabæans, and in order to conciliate their supporters he married Mariamne, a member of the popular family, by whom he had two sons who were greatly beloved by the people.

Herod had many enemies, and every effort was made to poison Antony's mind against him. He managed to keep out of the quarrel between Antony and Octavius; and when the battle of Actium decided the question in favour of the latter, he confirmed Herod in his government and even increased the area of the territory which was under his rule.

For some years Herod did Judæa excellent

service. He rebuilt Samaria and founded Cæsarea, a city on the sea-shore, with a fine breakwater and palatial buildings. During his reign there was a serious famine in Judæa, accompanied by pestilence. Herod behaved admirably at this crisis, putting all his wealth at the disposal of the sufferers; importing grain from Egypt, and supplying seed corn to the people.

He made a great bid for popularity by undertaking to rebuild the temple. The second temple, which had been built by Zerubbabel, was now five centuries old, of rude construction and greatly dilapidated. Yet, even so, Herod had to make his preparations for the new building before daring to touch the old, lest the Jews should think that he meant to destroy the temple altogether. But he acted in good faith, and at last the new building arose, stately and magnificent in marble and gold. Yet the erection of the temple did not suffice to give the Jews confidence in Herod, for, whilst he professed zeal for the Jewish religion, he did much in opposition to it. A conspiracy was formed to assassinate him, and, though it was discovered and the ringleaders were punished, he felt the insecurity of his position and built the tower of Antonia, commanding the temple, in order that he might quell riots and take refuge there in time of danger.

In considering Herod's character allowance must be made for him because of the misery of his domestic life. His foes were they of his own household. His arch enemy was Salome, his sister, an unscrupulous and bloodthirsty woman who had great influence over him and used it to his destruction. Herod was passionately attached

to Mariamne, his Maccabæan wife. Salome hated this excellent woman and made mischief between her and her husband so successfully that at last Herod ordered Mariamne to be put to death.

The queen died with great dignity, and his remorse was instant and terrible, his life being from that moment steeped in gloom, broken only by flashes of vindictive madness.

Herod had several wives and many sons. The eldest was Antipater, the son of Doris his first wife, whom he had divorced when he wedded Mariamne. The second and third sons were Aristobulus and Alexander, born to him by his martyred wife. Antipater lived in exile, and on Aristobulus and Alexander Herod lavished his affection. They were educated at Rome, from which city they returned highly accomplished, and as the Maccabæan blood flowed in their veins they were the idols of the people. The detestable Salome, fearing lest they might take vengeance on her for their mother's death, set herself to undermine their influence with their father, and persuaded him to recall Antipater, with whom she plotted against their lives. At length the intriguers worked Herod to such a pitch of frenzy that he ordered the execution of the youths, and scarcely was it over when he learned that he had been miserably deceived.

His brother Pheroras who lay dying was so touched by Herod's kindness in visiting him that he confessed himself to have been in a plot to poison him, the other conspirators being Herod's wife and Antipater his son. Antipater was then in Rome, and, when he unsuspectingly returned,

he was arrested. His guilt being proved, sentence of death was passed, subject to confirmation at Rome.

Herod was now an old man, and dying from an incurable disease. His last days were pitiable. He had murdered his beloved wife and his favourite sons at the bidding of his fiendish sister, who even yet kept her influence over him, and now he was awaiting the confirming order which would give him power to slay his first born.

It was about this time that the "massacre of the innocents" took place, the tragedy with which Herod's name is for ever associated. There is no record of it in profane history, but that is not wonderful, for it was but an incident in Herod's life. Bethlehem was a small town, and the number of male children in it from two years old and under would not be so great that their death need attract much notice. The king's death-bed was a terrible one. In his agony he attempted to commit suicide but was prevented. Consent had arrived for him to deal with Antipater as he wished. Perhaps he might have forgiven him, but at the last he heard of further plotting and ordered him to be slain.

Herod's last act was one of savage cruelty. He was lying at Jericho, and, determined that there should be mourning at his funeral, he summoned the leading Jews to attend him; and, when many assembled, he had them shut up in the hippodrome. He then called his sister Salome, whose cruelty he thought he could trust, and instructed her to see that they were massacred as soon as he was dead, but even Salome dared not carry out such orders, and released them.

So much confidence had the Romans in Herod that they had given him power to bequeath his kingdom to whom he would, subject to imperial confirmation. Accordingly he left the kingdom to Archelaus, whilst Antipas became tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip governor of Cæsarea. Archelaus therefore nominally "reigned in his stead," but he was never legally king, for his kingship was not confirmed by Rome. The Romans gave him temporarily the position of ethnarch, and refused the kingship until they saw whether he was worthy of it. After ten years of misgovernment an embassy consisting of both Jews and Samaritans went to Rome, lodged heavy complaints against him, and besought the emperor to depose him. Accordingly he was deposed and banished, and Judæa placed under procurators. Herod the Great was, therefore, the last of the vassal kings, and with him the sceptre may be said to have departed from Judah.

The scheme of the present work makes it necessary to interrupt the history of the Jewish race at the dawn of the Christian era. The siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, and other interesting events yet to be narrated, must therefore be left for another volume.

THE STORY OF PHŒNICIA

CHAPTER I

THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

PHŒNICIA was the name given by the Greeks to the strip of land lying on the Levant, between the mountains of Lebanon and the sea. Like the Greeks the Phœnicians prided themselves on their autonomy, and lived separately in their cities, having no common name but that of Canaanites, a name which applied equally to the inhabitants of the inland districts occupied by the Hebrews. The mountains came so near the shore that Phœnicia was but thirty miles across in its widest part, and in most places much narrower. Its length never exceeded 300 miles, and during the period concerning which we have most historic knowledge it was only about 120 miles long. Small, however, though the territory was, it was extremely diversified in character, having plains, like that of Sharon, of great beauty, and hills varying from the gentle heights of Carmel to the snow-clad mountains of Lebanon.

On their narrow strip of land the Phœnicians had twenty-five cities, of which, Tyre, Sidon, Aradus, Byblus, Marathus and Tripolis were specially important; Laodicea, Simyra, Arka, Aphaca, Berytus, Ecdippa, Accho, Dor and Joppa were of secondary importance; whilst Gabala,

Botrys, Sarepta and the rest were smaller still.

Having so little territory and so large a population the Phœnicians had to make the most of their space. Irrigation was freely adopted, and the slopes of the mountains terraced, in order to widen the area of arable land. The country produced food abundantly, but the non-agricultural section of the community was large, and food had often to be imported. Thus, when the Tyrians were helping Solomon to build the temple in Jerusalem, he recompensed them with quantities of wheat, barley, wine and oil; and at a later time, when trouble arose between Herod and Tyre and Sidon, the Phœnician ambassadors desired peace "because their country was fed from the king's country."

The Phœnicians belonged to the Semitic branch of the human family, and there is a theory that they came from the Persian Gulf, but we know nothing definite about them until we find them on the shores of the Mediterranean—a race of indefatigable merchants and explorers, their towns all seaports, their only thought, how best to push commerce wherever it could be pushed.

The Phœnicians did not excel in either architecture or æsthetic art, though the work done for Solomon shows that they were not without skill even in these branches. Their architecture was, however, heavy, and their æsthetic art primitive in character, but their industrial art was celebrated from the remotest times.

In the field of literature the Phœnicians have left nothing in book form worthy of preservation, but they are credited with having been the first

to depart from the clumsy and elaborate method of writing in pictorial and cuneiform characters, and to introduce the simpler letters upon which modern language is based. Other inventions in science and art are attributed to them; in arithmetic, weights and measures, glass manufacture, coinage, navigation and astronomy; and if they did not actually invent, they must at any rate have the credit of developing these things, and of introducing them to the peoples of the Mediterranean.

The religious sentiment was strong amongst the Phœnicians, as it has usually been amongst Semitic and seafaring races. Phœnician names were frequently given in honour of a deity, and there are many other signs that the gods were held in reverence. In early times they acknowledged one deity, speaking of him under different names, but in historic times they were polytheists, idolaters of the ordinary sort, and their gods were much the same as those of the surrounding nations. Baal was their chief god; Ashtoreth, the queen of heaven, was greatly worshipped; at Tyre there was a magnificent temple to Melkarth, otherwise known as Hercules; and they had other gods—Hadad, Dagon, Adonis and the rest. Worship was conducted with prayer, praise and sacrifice; and festivals were held in honour of special deities. As time went on, the religion of the Phœnicians became both fierce and sensual. A graphic picture of their worship is given in the Bible where Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to a controversy. At that time Jezebel, a Sidonian princess, was queen in Israel, and we read that the prophets, doubtless Phœnicians,

"cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them." Sometimes human sacrifices were offered. Melkarth was the local name for Moloch, who was supposed to reign supreme in time of war, pestilence and famine. On such occasions he had to be appeased, and when the occasion was important, human sacrifices were offered. We have not much information concerning these sacrifices in Phœnicia, owing to the absence of literary remains, but in Carthage there was a statue specially designed to receive them. However terrible such worship might be, it was doubtless sincere, and the offering of a child, horrible though it seems, may sometimes have been the despairing cry of a soul seeking to propitiate God, by giving him that which was more precious to the offerer than life itself.

CHAPTER II

INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

As merchants and industrial pioneers the Phœnicians were long unrivalled. Centuries before Rome was founded or Greece heard of in history, when Egypt was bound up in herself, or, if she sent armies forth, sent them only to plunder and destroy, whilst the Hebrews were yet in the house of bondage, and neither Assyria nor Babylonia had given sign of greatness, the ships of this extraordinary people were sailing far and wide, peacefully exchanging wares with all who desired to sell or to buy.

The Phœnicians were famous for their dyes. They had discovered that a shellfish on their coast secreted a tiny drop of fluid from which a dye could be extracted capable of being used in many gradations of colour, and so beautiful that the value of fabrics treated with it was increased tenfold. Cloth thus dyed was used by royalty, and the wealthy, but humbler people liked to have a little of it on their garments, if only a ribbon or narrow fringe. When the home fisheries became exhausted, the Phœnicians searched elsewhere for the shellfish, gradually ransacking the Mediterranean and establishing depôts at suitable places to which the natives brought the fish that it might be treated on the spot by skilful hands, only the valuable fluid being carried back to Phœnicia.

Trade, beginning in this simple way, soon expanded. Money was little used in those days, and would have been worthless to the native populations in any case. Trading was carried on by means of barter, and textile fabrics of all sorts —linen, woollen, cotton and silk, besides bronze work, glass, pottery, jewellery, arms and ornaments—were manufactured by the Phœnicians, and exchanged against whatever their customers had to give. In those days most ornaments, weapons and implements, were made of bronze which is an amalgam of copper and tin. Copper the Phœnicians obtained easily in Cyprus, but tin was harder to find, and in their search for it they went far afield. It was indeed thought that they ventured as far as Britain, sailing by way of the Straits of Gibraltar. It is known that they visited the Cassiterides or Tin Islands, and these were believed to be identical with the Scilly Isles, but

recent historians incline to the belief that the Cassiterides were small islands off the coast of Galicia in Spain, and think that if the Phœnicians obtained tin from Britain it must have come across France to the Mediterranean.

The trade of Phœnicia was not confined to the Mediterranean, nor restricted to maritime enterprise. Lying between east and west, Phœnicia was a convenient emporium for the produce of the known world, and her merchants became ubiquitous. They were to be found in Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh, Arabia and Persia. From Tyre and Sidon caravan routes diverged in many directions, and bodies of merchants keeping together for the sake of protection were continually on the move.

Trading operations on so wide a scale could not be carried on without permanent stations, and stations developed into settlements, settlements into colonies, with a rapidity which was the greater because their territory was small and they could only overflow into the sea. We cannot tell in what order their colonies were established, but they had cities on the shores of the Black Sea, in Thrace, Greece, the Islands of the Ægean, Cyprus, Sicily, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands, Spain and Africa. In Africa the important cities of Utica and Carthage were founded, and Lixos beyond the Straits of Gibraltar. Beyond Lixos, towards the Senegal, there were nearly 300 depôts for gathering the ivory and other valuables brought by the natives. In Spain they built the important city of Gades, a city now well known as Cadiz, and still prosperous. On the Guadalquivir lay the town and district of

Tarshish, with a surrounding country rich in precious metals, producing fine wool, and overflowing with oil, and wine and wheat. Wonderful tales are told of the wealth extracted by the Phœnicians from Spain; and, leaving a margin for exaggeration, it must have been very great, justifying the poetic fervour of Zechariah when he says: "Tyre did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets."

Ezekiel draws a vivid picture of Tyre in her greatness: "O thou that dwellest at the entry of the sea, which art the merchant of the peoples unto many isles. Thy borders are in the heart of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They have made all thy planks of fir trees from Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make a mast for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; they have made thy benches of ivory inlaid in boxwood, from the Isles of Cyprus. Of fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was thy sail, blue and purple from the Isles of the Ægean was thine awning. The inhabitants of Sidon and Aradus were thy rowers: thy wise men, O Tyre, were in thee, they were thy pilots. Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kinds of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded for thy wares. Javan, Tubal, and Mesech they were thy traffickers: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass for thy merchandise. They of the house of Armenia traded for thy wares with horses and war-horses and mules. Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of thy handiworks: they traded for thy wares with

emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and rubies. Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy traffickers: they traded for thy merchandise wheat, and honey, and oil, and balm. Damascus was thy merchant with the wine of Helbon and white wool. Dedan was thy trafficker in precious cloths for riding. Arabia in lambs, and rams and goats. Sheba and Raamah traded for thy wares with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones and gold. Haran and Canneh and Eden, Asshur and Chilmad, in choice wares, in bales of blue and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar, among thy merchandise. When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many peoples; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise. And thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas."

CHAPTER III

GREATNESS

We first touch Phœnician history in connection with the reign of Thothmes III., the Egyptian conqueror, who during his long reign of fifty-four years subdued Canaan, and made it into a province. The cities had to send tribute and the most important of them were placed under Egyptian governors, but otherwise they were probably not much interfered with. The annals of this king show that at that early date these

cities were advanced in civilisation, and the treasure which he brought with him to Egypt proves that they were wealthy and able to manufacture articles of beauty.

The Tel el-Amarna letters give us much interesting information about the Phœnician cities. They were still under Egyptian governors, but the power of Egypt was not what it had been; there were evidently many rebellious spirits in them and they were slipping from Egyptian grasp. The eighteenth dynasty of which Thothmes was a member came to an end; and though the kings of the nineteenth strove to conquer Syria, and still spoke of the princes of Tyre as vassals, Egypt never regained her position in Asia. From the Tel el-Amarna letters we learn that Tyre was already famous on account of her wealth. One writer says: "Behold, the palace of the city of Tyre: there is no palace of any other governor like unto it; exceeding great is the wealth." Notwithstanding the surpassing greatness of Tyre, Sidon had the earlier pre-eminence, and seems even to have given its name to the district on which the cities stood. In Genesis we read that "Canaan begat Sidon his first born"; in Joshua "Great Sidon" is mentioned, and "the fenced city of Tyre"; and in Homer, whilst mention is made of Sidonian wares, Tyre is not spoken of. Evidently, therefore, in the early centuries Sidon was predominant. Its name is probably derived from Said, the god of fishermen, and the teeming city with its harbour and wide commerce, doubtless grew out of a small fishing village. Tyre, the city of the rock, which eventually surpassed Sidon, was of later foundation.

The Phœnicians occupied a territory well guarded by nature. On one side lay the Mediterranean, on the other the mountains of Lebanon with their forests, precipices and snow-clad peaks. Phœnicia was out of the way, and when other parts of Syria were overrun, it escaped. When kings determined to subjugate it, they approached either from the northern or southern extremity of Lebanon. If they came from the north, the island city of Aradus had to bear the brunt of the fighting; if from the south, it fell upon Tyre. History makes it clear that when it was needful the Phœnicians could fight with desperate courage, but it was rarely that they cared to offer much resistance to an invader. Business considerations generally made it more prudent for them to submit. If they were attacked by Assyria, Babylonia or Egypt, it suited them better to submit nominally and agree to the payment of tribute, for even if they could hope successfully to defy a great power, there would be an end to pacific trading, and the tribute which secured its friendship was as nothing compared with the loss of profit which would result from its enmity. Thus the Phœnicians paid tribute willingly, looking upon it as a toll by which they gained permission to trade freely, and recouped themselves a hundredfold. For a similar reason, they were in the habit of paying a ground rent to the natives amongst whom they founded settlements, and of continuing payment even when their settlements became powerful and could have safely defied their neighbours. It was not cowardice nor want of patriotism which induced them to take such a course, but an intelligent appre-

ciation of what was best for their material interest.

There have been writers who have accused the Phœnicians of deceit, of disregarding the rights of weaker peoples, and of sharp practice in trading. Doubtless there were many dishonest Phœnicians, but it is absurd to imagine that dishonesty could have been a national characteristic. The Phœnicians must as a race have won the respect and confidence of the natives with whom they traded, or their history would tell of reprisal and massacre, instead of being a record of peaceful trading with civilised and uncivilised alike for centuries of time.

The supremacy of Sidon over the other Phœnician cities was rudely shaken by a war with the Philistines. This hardy pirate race had come to Canaan during the tribal movement which threatened Egypt in the reign of Ramses III., and had established themselves in Ashdod, Askelon, Ekron, Gaza and Gath. Being great fighters they quarrelled with the Sidonians about the possession of Dor. Dor was really in Philistia, but had been colonised by Sidon, and was a favourite fishing-ground, possessing fine beds of the shell fish, from which their dye was extracted. An obstinate war resulted, in which the Sidonians were worsted; and perhaps it was about this time that Tyre forged ahead and became the foremost city in Phœnicia.

The first king of Tyre of whom we have historic knowledge is Hiram, said to have been the son of Abi-Baal. Owing to difficulties in chronology, the precise date of the accession of Hiram cannot be fixed, but it must have been towards the end

of the reign of King David. Hiram was only nineteen when he became king, and he reigned between thirty and forty years, rebuilding Tyre and raising it to great prosperity and power. When he came to the throne, the city stood on two islands, and there was little available building land. Hiram filled up the space between the islands, and reclaimed land from the sea, so that he not only enlarged the building area, but could afford to have a public square in the middle of the city. Walls were also built, the harbours improved, and the temple of Melkarth restored. The trade of Phœnicia was greatly helped in his reign by the disappearance of the Philistine pirates from the Levant. They had been buccaneers by profession, but King David subdued them, and incorporated the more turbulent spirits amongst them in his army, to the great benefit of the Phœnician trader. It was little wonder, therefore, if Hiram admired the Hebrew monarch, and kept on friendly terms with his son. There were other reasons why the Phœnicians should desire to be friendly with the Hebrews. Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt were now depressed, and David's kingdom stretched over Syria, covering the caravan routes by which the merchandise of Asia found its way to Phœnicia. Moreover, Hiram and Solomon could be mutually helpful. Solomon commanded the east, Hiram the west. Edom, with its Red Sea harbours, was a Hebrew province, whilst the best ports on the Mediterranean were Phœnician. Accordingly a trading partnership was entered into by the kings, to their mutual benefit, Solomon importing European products through Tyre, whilst Hiram used the

Hebrew ports in his trade with Arabia and Ophir.

The partnership was useful in another way. King David had founded an empire and established Jerusalem as its capital, but he had done little to make the capital worthy of the empire. Solomon, imitating Hiram, and the Pharaohs with whom he had made matrimonial alliance, determined to build on a great scale. In this matter Hiram did him much service, for the Hebrews were an agricultural people, unskilled either in architecture or art, whereas Tyre had an abundant supply of handicraftsmen. Already either Hiram or his father had sent at David's request large quantities of material, which was stored in readiness for the work, and now Hiram gladly threw his energies into it, sending material and lending architects and workmen without stint. The temple occupied seven years in building, and Solomon also built palaces for himself and his Egyptian queen. The fortifications of the city were greatly strengthened, and the palace was protected by a fortress called Millo. These works occupied twenty years, and the friendship of the monarchs continued during the whole of their lives, although Solomon treated Hiram somewhat shabbily on one occasion, giving him, in exchange for a large quantity of gold, a district of Galilee, which seems to have been worthless both to himself and to Hiram.

The friendship of Solomon was of peculiar value to the Phœnicians at this period of their history. It was the time when the Greeks, who had learned shipbuilding and navigation from the Phœnicians, were seriously competing with them

pressing them out of the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean, and causing them to seek other outlets for their trade. These they were finding in Sicily, Africa and Spain, and having also access to the east, they became very rich, and the grandeur of Phœnicia reached its zenith.

During Hiram's reign the Phœnicians engaged in a war of some importance, conjectured to have been with Utica, an important colony near the site on which Carthage was afterwards built. Hiram succeeded in quelling the revolt, and in handing down his empire to his son unimpaired.

Baal-azar, his son, reigned uneventfully for seven years, and was succeeded by Abdstarte I., who reigned peacefully for nine years, but was then murdered; and years of trouble followed, during which the monarchs met with violent deaths and the dynasty was thrice changed.

Phœnicia could not now trade with the East so freely as in the days of David and Solomon. The Hebrew monarchy was divided, rival kings sat on the thrones of Israel and Judah, and the outlying portions of the empire had seceded, and were often in open enmity and war. Farther east still, Assyria was raising her head threateningly, and would soon strike the nations of Western Asia with deadly force. Ethbaal was king of Tyre when Phœnicia came into contact with Assyria. It was not actually for the first time, because two centuries earlier Tiglath-Pileser I. had made an excursion to the shore of Syria, and been hospitably entertained by the inhabitants of Aradus, the most northern of the Phœnician ports. But the greatness of Tiglath Pileser I. was premature, and Assyria had lain

dormant until, in the ninth century before our era, aided by the break-up of the Hebrew monarchy, she began to reassert herself. Assur-nazir-pal, her monarch, carried desolation into Western Asia, but his attack was chiefly directed against the Hittites, and the Phœnicians satisfied him by sending gifts. Ethbaal was contemporaneous with Ahab, king of Israel, who married Jezebel, his daughter. He was a man of enterprise, during whose reign Tyre held her own. Ethbaal was succeeded by Baal-azar, and he by Metten I. Metten reigned for nine years and died, leaving Pygmalion, an infant son, but nominating as his successor Sicharbas, the High Priest of Melkarth, who was married to Elissa, his daughter. The tale runs that when Pygmalion came to manhood he killed Sicharbas, upon which Elissa, with such nobles as adhered to her, fled, first to Cyprus and afterwards to Africa, where a site was obtained and the Colony of Carthage founded.

CHAPTER IV

SUBJECTION

PHŒNICIA had been invaded by Assur-nazir-pal, but the Assyrian had been bought off by rich gifts and a nominal subjection, and during his long reign he gave Phœnicia no serious trouble.

Shalmaneser II., his son, warred continuously with Syria, especially with Hamath and Damascus, which were helped by the Phœnician cities, but at last all submitted, agreeing to pay an annual

tribute, and sending valuable presents from time to time. The friendship of Assyria was now as necessary to the Phœnicians as that of the Hebrews had been in earlier times, for the oriental caravan routes crossed Assyrian dependencies. The payment of tribute, therefore, was in a sense for service rendered, and did not of itself imply that Phœnicia had ceased to be prosperous. The prophet could still speak of Tyre as: "The crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth."

But Tiglath-Pileser III. attempted to draw the bonds closer, and compelled various cities in Northern Syria and Phœnicia to accept Assyrian governors. For a time this bondage was borne; but, when it was seen to be merely a step in the process of absorption, a revolt ensued in which the Phœnician city of Simyra joined. The revolt was unsuccessful, and the city was destroyed. The fate of Simyra alarmed the other Phœnician cities, and Elulæus, king of Tyre, fearing lest they should be swallowed up separately, endeavoured to get them to unite in a defensive alliance against the common dangers. Accordingly when Shalmaneser IV. invaded Phœnicia they showed a united front, and he was at first foiled. Afterwards he sent emissaries to stir up disaffection, who were so successful that Tyre was left to fight a single-handed battle. Even so, the brave city proved a match for him, holding out until he died or was murdered, and Sargon became king.

Elulæus seems to have made honourable terms with Sargon, and to have prospered under his suzerainty, restoring the alliance with, and in some

degree re-establishing his own authority over the other Phœnician cities.

Sargon was succeeded by Sennacherib, who determined to subjugate Western Asia thoroughly. As usual when there was a change of monarch, the subject countries had become restless, and, encouraged by Egypt, Phœnicia and Judah threw off the Assyrian yoke. Sennacherib levied an army of 200,000 men and marched upon Phœnicia; and Elulæus, who was still king of Tyre, was so alarmed that he fled to Cyprus. After this Sennacherib subdued the cities one after the other without difficulty, though he does not claim to have captured Tyre; and then, having appointed Tubaal as king of Phœnicia in place of Elulæus, he marched southward on that ill-fated campaign in which he lost the greater part of his army.

In the reign of Esarhaddon, Abdi-Melkarth, the king of Sidon, who seems to have succeeded Tubaal, revolted. Esarhaddon attacked Sidon and the king fled, but was captured and executed; after which Sidon was treated with great severity, the town being largely destroyed, most of the inhabitants carried off to Assyria, and their places filled by captives from Babylonia and Elam. At this time Baal, king of Tyre, was a favourite at the Assyrian Court; but afterwards, when Esarhaddon determined on the conquest of Egypt, he complains that Baal sided with the enemy, "putting his trust in Tirhakah, king of Cush." Egypt was conquered and Tyre blockaded, but after a time, either during the reign of Esarhaddon or that of his successor Assur-bani-pal, the city surrendered on honourable terms, and Baal was permitted to retain his throne.

The conquest of Egypt had to be undertaken over again by Assur-bani-pal, but, when it had been successfully accomplished, he determined to humble Baal, either for some new offence or because the old had never been properly avenged. Tyre was accordingly blockaded on the land side, until the king was constrained to plead for grace, when he was once more restored to favour. It may seem strange that Tyre should have been so often forgiven, but it was at that time the greatest commercial city in the world, and capable of paying a heavy tribute, which the Assyrian kings did not care to lose. When other Phœnician towns revolted, they were not so leniently dealt with, and the fate of Sidon, Simyra and Acre might have ultimately overtaken Tyre, had not Assyria herself been destroyed by her enemies.

Before the end of the reign of Assur-bani-pal it became evident that Assyria had overtaxed her strength, and decay began to set in. The careful arrangements made for maintaining supremacy in Egypt were overthrown by Psamatik, who dared even to cross the frontier and invade Palestine, whilst Phœnicia became once more independent. Meanwhile Assyria was contending for existence. Elam and Babylonia had revolted, and though fire and sword had been carried through both countries unsparingly, the people were only half subdued. In the north a new power, the Median, had arisen, and Assyria was invaded by unsparing foes. The attack did not immediately succeed, for Cyaxares, who led it, had to return to save his own country from the Scythians, but the relief was only for a moment. Soon Assyria herself

was trodden underfoot by the barbarians, and, when their invasion had spent itself, she had lost her empire. The Medes and Babylonians had but to strike a final blow, and Nineveh succumbed.

Phœnicia was now free from Assyria, but her conquerors had to be reckoned with. The final downfall of the great empire had been brought about by Egypt, Media and Babylon, and the first blow had been struck by Egypt, Pharaoh Necho having captured Carchemish, and cut Assyria off from the western half of her empire. By right of conquest, therefore, Phœnicia belonged to Egypt, but scarcely had Nineveh fallen when Nebuchadrezzar, son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, attacked the Egyptians and drove them headlong out of Syria back to their own land. Even there they would not have been permitted to rest but that Nabopolassar died and Nebuchadrezzar had to return quickly to make his succession sure. The Phœnicians now passed under the suzerainty of Babylon, but they kept up friendly relations with Egypt, where Necho wisely devoted his energies to the development of his country. In this estimable work he was helped by the Phœnicians, who are thought to have been permitted by him to establish a colony at Memphis. During Necho's reign they performed a notable feat. The Egyptian king was anxious to find a way of transporting his fleet from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and at first tried to solve the problem by digging a canal. This work proved beyond his strength, and he determined to see whether it might not be possible to circumnavigate Africa. Accordingly he

persuaded Phœnician sailors to undertake the experimental voyage, and they were successful, starting from the Red Sea, rounding the Cape, and returning by way of the Straits of Gibraltar. The voyage took nearly three years to accomplish, for they only sailed by daylight, lay by in rough weather, landed in the autumn, and remained on shore long enough to sow seed and raise a crop of corn. When they returned they declared that in sailing westward they had the sun on their right hand, that is in the north—a story which was then treated as incredible, but now proves that they actually performed the feat. Thus Africa was circumnavigated by Phœnicians 2000 years before Vasco da Gama, nor is it exaggeration to term their voyage the most daring that has ever been attempted in the world's history. As the distance round Africa proved to be so great, the route was valueless for the purpose which Necho had in hand, and as its scientific importance was not realised at that time, the very fact that Africa was circumnavigable was forgotten.

Meanwhile under the rule of Nebuchadrezzar, Babylon took up the position which Assyria had occupied amongst the western nations, and was as cordially hated by them as her predecessor had been. A spirit of disaffection quickly spread, and Phœnicia and Palestine drew towards Egypt —Necho doing his best to foment rebellion. A revolt took place immediately after Nebuchadrezzar ascended the throne, but the Babylonians were at war with Elam, and it was some years before he could attend to his Syrian province. At last he marched westward and besieged Jerusalem. The city soon fell and was destroyed,

the temple was burnt, the king carried prisoner to Babylon. Other cities having been disposed of in like manner, Nebuchadrezzar laid siege to Tyre; but as the Tyrians had command of the sea, the siege was tedious, and it was thirteen years before the city submitted. Apparently Nebuchadrezzar was satisfied with its submission and did not further injure it, but the long siege had diminished its commerce, and Sidon regained its ancient position and became the leading city in Phœnicia.

Under Babylonian rule the condition of Phœnicia was one of steady decline. The Greeks were now very active in the Mediterranean, and had obtained a large share of the commerce which the Phœnicians had formerly enjoyed as a monopoly. Carthage was also expanding rapidly, and much of the trade in Spain, at one time so lucrative, was now diverted from the mother country to her enterprising colony. Under any circumstances, therefore, the Phœnicians would have had a struggle to hold their own, but the effort was made much harder by Nebuchadrezzar, who reduced their cities to a condition of dependence which cramped both political and industrial progress. From this time, therefore, Tyre became of less significance in the world's history, although she still enjoyed a moderate degree of prosperity.

CHAPTER V

SUBJUGATION

THE condition of Phœnicia under Babylonian rule had been so unhappy that she must have viewed the fall of the Babylonian empire and the rise of the Persian with satisfaction. Nor would the satisfaction of the Phœnicians be the less marked because Cyrus the new conqueror was so much occupied establishing his authority elsewhere that he had no time to trouble with them. All that a trading country really needs is to be left alone, and Phœnicia was left alone during the reign of Cyrus. She therefore courageously resumed her commercial career, and met with a satisfactory amount of success, though the glory of former days could not again return.

One of the first acts of Cyrus had been to permit exiles to return to their homes. Amongst those who took advantage of his offer were the Jews, and probably also many Phœnicians. The Jews at once set about rebuilding their temple, and it is interesting to notice that in doing this they were helped by the Phœnicians as loyally as they had been helped when building the first temple. Ezra relates how they gave money to the masons and to the carpenters; "and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Sidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus, king of Persia."

Cyrus had been too busy to pay attention to the conquest of Phœnicia and Egypt, but his son

Cambyses no sooner succeeded him than he marched west with an overwhelming force. The Phœnicians wisely attempted no resistance, and Cambyses, realising how useful they might be in connection with the invasion of Egypt, did all he could to gain their friendship. Accordingly they placed a large fleet at his disposal, aided by which the conquest of Egypt was successfully accomplished. Unfortunately Cambyses determined on three further expeditions, two of which ended disastrously. The third was to have been against the important city of Carthage, but he had to abandon his intention owing to the patriotic attitude of the Phœnicians, who refused to fight against their own colony.

After Cambyses' death his successors found the maritime people exceedingly useful and showed them favour, in return for which they provided the most important section of the Persian navy. During the reign of Darius Phœnicia prospered, for the arrangements which he made for the protection of travellers, the building of roads and bridges, and the establishment of a gold and silver currency, facilitated commerce. The Phœnicians were therefore contented, and when Aristagoras of Miletus revolted, and the revolt spread throughout the Greek cities of Asia Minor, and much depended on the action which the Phœnicians might take, they stood loyally by Persia.

The course taken by Athens during the revolt in Asia Minor determined Darius to invade Greece, and he sent an expedition under Mardonius, but it met with many disasters and returned ingloriously. Two years later another

fleet sailed across the Ægean under Datis and Artaphernes, with the army which was so signally defeated by the Athenians on the plain of Marathon.

Darius dying, the next attempt against Greece was made by Xerxes, and in this the Phœnicians, who had doubtless contributed their share to the fleets of the former expeditions, played an important part. A ship canal was dug through the peninsula of Mount Athos and a bridge of boats constructed over the Hellespont, in both of which operations their workmen showed the greatest skill, and in the war fleet of 1200 vessels the Phœnician ships were the most numerous and the best manned. Accordingly they got the brunt of the work, and at Salamis had the honour of being pitted against the Athenians, who were the best fighters in the Greek fleet. Owing to the narrowness of the seas the Phœnicians were beaten with the rest; and Xerxes, in his rage, threatened them so violently that they are said to have left the fleet and returned home.

After Salamis the Phœnicians were for a time not quite so forward in helping Persia, but the feeling of chagrin wore off, and they continued to play an important part on critical occasions. At the battle of Eurymedon where Cimon gained so great a victory for the Athenians, many Phœnician vessels were engaged, and indeed for a long time the Phœnicians were Persia's chief support in her naval warfare. But for them the Persians could neither have governed the cities of the Asiatic Greeks nor held the balance of power between the Greek States.

Twice at least the Phœnicians were useful to the Athenians, helping them to win the important battle of Cnidus, in which fell the Spartan power in Asia, and next year aiding them to rebuild the long walls which had been destroyed at the end of the Peloponnesian war.

The power of Persia was now, however, on the wane. Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon) had succeeded to the throne, and his brother Cyrus, determining to wrest the crown from him, marched on Babylon with an army of which the principal fighting corps consisted of 13,000 Greeks. Cyrus was killed at Cunaxa, and the Greeks had to fight their way home again from the very heart of Persia. They did this successfully, and the fact that such a thing could be done greatly lowered Persian prestige.

Not long afterwards Evagoras of Cyprus revolted against Persia and held his own for ten years, carrying his arms to the mainland, and capturing Tyre, perhaps with the connivance of a section of the people, but Artaxerxes made a great effort and defeated him, permitting him, however, to retain his position as king.

During the reign of Darius Nothus, the predecessor of Artaxerxes, Egypt had thrown off the Persian yoke; and Artaxerxes sent an army to bring it again under subjection. The army was under the joint leadership of Iphicrates, an Athenian general, and Pharnabazus, a Persian, but owing to disagreement between them they achieved nothing, and the expedition had to retire. After this there was a revolt of the satraps of Asia Minor, and an invasion of Syria

by Egypt; and, though these came to nought, yet in the end of the reign of Artaxerxes Persia was much less powerful.

When Ochus succeeded to the throne (after several assassinations), reigning as Artaxerxes III., he determined to reconquer Egypt, which had now been independent for about half a century. Nectanebo was the reigning Pharaoh and Ochus marched against him, but he had obtained the help of Greek generals and met his adversary boldly—defeating him in the field. This reverse encouraged further disaffection, and Phœnicia declared for independence. The revolt was headed by Tennes II., king of Sidon, who persuaded the other cities to follow his lead and made alliance with Nectanebo, obtaining from him a band of Greek mercenaries under Mentor, a Rhodian. Thus aided Tennes drove the Persians out of Phœnicia, and nine chief cities threw off their yoke. Ochus, recognising the serious nature of the revolt, invaded Phœnicia with 300,000 men, at the approach of whom Tennes lost courage and concerted measures with Mentor for the betrayal of Sidon to the enemy. It is likely enough that Mentor had been bribed by the Persians already, because soon after we find him transferring himself and his mercenaries to Ochus, and he had the command of the Greek mercenaries in the campaign against Egypt which followed. The result of Tennes' cowardice was terrible. Ochus obtained entrance into the city, and the Sidonians, having tried in vain to make terms, in despair shut themselves into their houses and set fire to the city—40,000 persons perishing in the dreadful conflagration. After the

destruction of Sidon Tennes was executed by the Persians, so that he gained nothing by his treachery.

The fate of Sidon cowed the Phœnicians, and Ochus was able to turn his arms against Egypt, which he speedily reconquered. The Phœnician cities had now peace for a time, and trade once more flourished, and though the leadership passed to Tyre, Sidon was rebuilt, and had some share in the general prosperity.

CHAPTER VI

DESTRUCTION

DARIUS CODOMANNUS ascended the Persian throne just before Alexander succeeded to that of Macedonia. The Persians had been preparing to meet an invasion by Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander, but thought that with his death danger had passed away. The rapid success of the young king in Thrace, Illyria and Bœotia undeceived them, and preparations for defence were resumed. Had Darius been wise he would have tried to prevent Alexander from crossing the Hellespont, for he could easily have gathered a much greater fleet than Alexander possessed. But though he had given instructions to the Phœnicians to prepare a fleet, no effort was made to bring it up at the critical moment, and the Macedonians crossed unopposed.

The defeat of the Persians at the battle of the Granicus and the subjugation of Asia Minor

quickly followed, then came the battle of Issus, and Darius was in headlong flight. Alexander had now to choose whether he would at once pursue the king eastward, or first subdue Phœnicia and Egypt. The latter, though the more tedious, was the safer course, for so long as Phœnicia was under Persian influence there was little to hinder Darius from opening up communication with Southern Greece and fomenting rebellion there against his enemy. Alexander knew that Persian gold was more potent than the Persian sword; and, therefore, leaving Darius to gather another army at his leisure, he determined to first subjugate the seaboard provinces.

Accordingly he marched southward, and the Phœnician cities, recognising the decisive character of the battle of Issus, surrendered—Tyre amongst the rest. Unfortunately a dispute arose with the Tyrians, because Alexander demanded permission to sacrifice in their temple of Melkarth; and they, fearing he would leave a garrison in the city, refused to admit him, whereupon in great wrath he determined to enter by force. It would have been wiser had the Tyrians yielded the point, but Alexander's prowess had not yet been fully tested, and they knew that their city was not easily captured. Their fortifications were powerful, they had command of the sea, Darius would surely come to their aid, and perhaps Carthage, now a very great city, might help them, so they sent their aged citizens and many of their women and children to Carthage, and prepared to offer a stout resistance. But the fates were against them. Neither Darius nor the Carthaginians put in an appearance. Alexander built a mole from

the mainland to the city and gathered a great fleet, compelling the other Phœnician cities to supply ships to fight against their friends. The Tyrians resisted with the utmost heroism, and the siege was as desperate in character as the later sieges of Carthage and Jerusalem. But all was in vain: the mole was finished, and the city assaulted by land and sea. The carnage was terrible, most of the Tyrians fell with arms in their hands, those who were taken prisoners were crucified, the women, children and slaves sold to the highest bidder. After the carnage Alexander performed the religious ceremony upon which he had set his heart, and athletic sports brought the drama to an end.

Alexander had no more trouble with the Phœnicians during the remainder of his brief career, and on several occasions they were useful to him. Their nautical skill helped him in his voyage down the Indus, and their sailors accompanied Nearchus with the fleet which sailed from the Indus through the Persian Gulf to Babylon. After Alexander's return to Babylon he determined to explore the seaboard of Arabia, and it is even thought that he proposed to circumnavigate Africa. Vessels were built in Phœnicia and carried in sections to the Euphrates, where they were put together and brought down to Babylon. With this fleet and the aid of the Phœnicians Alexander would probably have accomplished much, but death claimed him before his schemes could be carried into effect.

His empire was divided amongst his generals, and Phœnicia fell to Laomedon, but in a year or

two, Ptolemy, to whom Egypt had fallen, attacked Laomedon, and seized Phœnicia. Some years later Ptolemy was in his turn attacked by Antigonus, and had to relinquish his ill-gotten possession. Strangely enough the only city that offered much resistance was Tyre, which though destroyed by Alexander only eighteen years before had so far recovered that it held out against Antigonus for fifteen months, and then only surrendered because provisions had failed. About thirty years later Phœnicia again fell under Egyptian rule, and so remained for seventy years. It then became for a time the battle-ground of Egypt and Syria, after which it passed finally into the hands of the latter power.

Times had now greatly changed for the Phœnicians from a commercial point of view. For many centuries they had been without rivals; then the Greeks had pushed them from the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Romans from the West. During his residence in Egypt Alexander had founded the city of Alexandria, and it had made progress and was cutting Phœnicia out of much of her Egyptian trade. All this, however, Phœnicia could have surmounted but for the repeated destruction of her cities, and the war and pillage to which she had been so frequently subjected. Nevertheless she did her best, and under the Seleucidæ prospered to some extent, Tyre being still famous for her dyes and Sidon for the manufacture of glass. At last the kingdom of the Seleucidæ came to an end. Their subjects had sought the help of Tigranes, king of Armenia, and he governed the country for some years, until Rome, offended by his action during

the Mithridatic war, compelled him to retire from Syria, placing Antiochus Asiaticus, a member of the family of the Seleucidæ, in his place. The restoration was a failure, and in a few years Rome again came forward, and the kingdom of the Seleucidæ, including Phœnicia, became a Roman Province; the towns of Tyre, Sidon and Tripolis being allowed the privileges of free cities, with their own magistrates and councils.

Under the Romans, the Phœnician cities prospered in a measure, and, indeed, Tyre and Sidon were flourishing cities even in the time of the Crusades, but the history of the Phœnicians as a people ends with their absorption by Rome. Nor had their mission in the world been unfulfilled. They had done a great work as pioneers of commerce and civilisation. For more than a thousand years they had been the world's greatest traders, not striving to extend commerce by increasing territory, nor seeking to establish a kingdom by blood and iron, but paying honestly for such territory as they required, and winning their way amongst the races of mankind by the material benefits which they conferred. When other nations fancied that glory could only be found on the field of battle, the Phœnicians were finding a more enduring glory by feats of exploration; when they thought wealth must be amassed by murder and pillage, the Phœnicians were showing how a people might become rich by patient continuance in well-doing. Though they had to contend against many natural disadvantages, and were exposed to much brutality from more powerful but less deserving nations, they taught

the world a lesson which can never be forgotten, and which is unfortunately as much needed to-day as it was when Phœnicia began to teach it—fifteen centuries before the Christian era.

THE STORY OF CARTHAGE

CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF CARTHAGE

THE date of the foundation of Carthage is generally placed a century before that of Rome and this is probably as good an approximation as we need desire in a matter so indefinite. Carthage is said to have been founded by the Tyrians, and though by no means their oldest colony it became their greatest. Both Gades in Spain and Utica in Africa were founded centuries before Carthage; but it became rich and powerful, and soon threw the other colonies into the shade.

The story runs that a king of Tyre named Pygmalion murdered his sister's husband, the priest of Melkarth, for the sake of his treasure, upon which his sister Elissa fled, carrying the treasure with her. She was accompanied by a number of leading Tyrians, and after touching at Cyprus they went on to Utica, and, settling near that city, built Carthage.

Carthage was burnt to the ground by the Romans after it had been in existence seven centuries, and in the conflagration its libraries and records perished. The few books saved were thoughtlessly scattered by the Romans, and of what was probably a considerable amount of literature, only a few treatises survived—a work

upon agriculture in twenty-eight books by Mago, which was translated into Latin by order of the Senate, and afterwards into Greek, and two books of travel. For our knowledge of Carthage therefore we are dependent mainly upon the writings of Roman authors, who generally wrote in a hostile spirit. In reading their comments we have to bear this in mind, remembering also the words of Cicero when he says: "Neither could Carthage have maintained her eminent position for 600 years had she not been governed with wisdom and high statesmanship."

There was an essential difference between the lines of foreign policy laid down by Tyre and by her great colony. The Tyrians did not force trade upon any unwilling people. Unless the advantages which they could confer by trading made them welcome, they went elsewhere. The world was wide enough to furnish a market for their wares, and if one nation declined to deal with them another would. When they were attacked they fought tenaciously, but they were too wise to think that commerce and the sword should go hand in hand. With the Carthaginians it was otherwise. Whilst willing to be peaceful, and eager to trade, the lust of empire took possession of them, and the wealth they made in commerce was thrown away in war.

The Phœnicians had traded for centuries before Carthage was founded, and had occupied many prominent places in the Mediterranean before any competitors appeared on the scene. The coast of Sicily was dotted with Phœnician depôts, and the island being fertile, there was a lively trade. Gradually, however, the Greeks pressed

forward, founding colonies both there and in Italy. Naxos, Syracuse, Catania and Leontini were thus founded, and later Gela, Himera and other cities. The Phœnicians did not care to fight with the Greeks about Sicily, and retired gradually before them; but the Carthaginians were not so complaisant, and though they withdrew from the eastern portion of the island they held the western portion fast. It would have been better for Carthage had she let Sicily go. Her history is little more than the record of a struggle to keep her footing there, first with the Greeks and afterwards with the Romans, a struggle which cost her, during its progress, more than the commercial value of the island, and ended with her destruction.

As Carthage grew in importance she gradually took the place in the Western Mediterranean which had been occupied by Tyre; but the relations between the mother country and her colony remained friendly throughout. Carthage sent a voluntary tribute to the temple of Melkarth from time to time; and when Cambyses conquered Egypt, and wanted the Phœnicians, who formed the major portion of his fleet, to help him to conquer Carthage, they refused. Later, when Tyre was besieged by Alexander and was in extremity, the Tyrians sent their wives, children and old men to Carthage for refuge.

The religion of the Carthaginians, like that of Tyre, amounted largely to a deification of the powers of nature. Their chief deities were Moloch, the sun god; Ashtoreth or Venus, the moon god, known to them as Tanit; and Dagon, the fish god. They worshipped Moloch with

human sacrifices, not often perhaps, but at times of national peril. The Druids did much the same.

The government of Carthage was a timocracy —an oligarchy based upon wealth. There were two elective magistrates at the head, but most of the power was in the hands of an assembly known as "The Hundred," vacancies in which were filled by co-option. The oligarchy must have given satisfaction on the whole; for whereas, in the Greek and Sicilian cities revolutions were of frequent occurrence, it was not so in Carthage. Aristotle tells us that the Carthaginians were "a well-governed people," and that their government "deserved to stand in high repute." Carthage was not happy in the management of her dependencies. She had, at one time or another, many of these. The islands of the Western Mediterranean; settlements in Spain; numerous colonies on the African coast, stretching almost to the equator; cities in Sicily; and most of the earlier Phœnician settlements fell under her power and paid her tribute. The African tribes who surrounded the city were little better than slaves, and wealthy Carthaginians worked their estates and mines by slave labour. These Libyan subjects had no love for Carthage, they quickly deserted her standard, and even took up arms against her when opportunity arose.

Carthage was a great city, perhaps one of the greatest cities of antiquity. Its commerce was wonderful, it had splendid harbours, was strongly fortified with triple walls, and contained before its destruction, and after it had passed through much trouble, a large population. The citizens

of Carthage are said to have numbered 700,000, but in this figure the whole province must have been included, as the city proper could scarcely have contained more than 250,000.

The Carthaginians were great explorers and founded many colonies. We have records of two expeditions undertaken in the fifth century before the Christian era, to the west coast of Europe and Africa respectively. The description of the European voyage of exploration is unreliable, but that of Hanno down the coast of Africa has many marks of authenticity. It would seem that Carthage was greatly overcrowded, and Hanno carried in his fleet 30,000 half castes and settled them at favourable places on the Atlantic seaboard. He passed the Senegal River, and must have reached the Cameroons, for he describes a volcano which is to be found in that mountain range. Hanno also discovered the "gorilla," the name now so familiar occurring first in the Greek description of his voyage. About a century before this expedition, the Canaanitish Phœnicians had, at the instigation of Pharaoh Necho, circumnavigated Africa, so that the two most daring voyages of antiquity were undertaken, the one by the Phœnicians, the other by their colonists, the Carthaginians.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE GREEKS

THE earliest recorded conflict between the Greeks and Carthaginians was at Marseilles, a city which

the Phocæan Greeks had established, and which had become so prosperous as to arouse the jealousy of Carthage. The Carthaginians accordingly attacked it, but were worsted.

Somewhat later the Carthaginians joined hands with the Etruscans to prevent the Phocæans from settling in Corsica, and the allies were successful, although not without a struggle.

The first conflict on a grand scale between Greeks and Carthaginians was in Sicily, and contemporaneous with the invasion of Greece by Xerxes. So remarkable a coincidence could not have been undesigned. Xerxes knew that Gelo, the ruler of Syracuse, had a large army and had been asked by the Greeks to help them against the Persians. Nothing is more likely, therefore, than that Xerxes arranged through the Phœnicians that their colonists should invade Sicily and give Gelo work to do at home. With this aim a vast Carthaginian army landed at Panormus (Palermo) and marched on Himera under a general named Hamilcar, intending to conquer the island. It was attacked, however, by Gelo of Syracuse and Thero of Agrigentum and utterly routed, Hamilcar himself being slain; and about the same time, at Salamis, the forces of Xerxes were overthrown.

About seventy years after Salamis, the Athenians, tempted by the inhabitants of Egesta, invaded Sicily, but their armament was destroyed at Syracuse, and the Egestians, undeterred by the misery which they had brought upon the Athenians, next appealed to the Carthaginians for help. The Carthaginians, after some hesitation, again invaded Sicily, and this time they were

successful. The army was commanded by a grandson of Hamilcar named Hannibal, who thought he had wrongs to avenge. He did this in barbarous fashion, destroying the cities of Selinus and Himera, slaughtering most of their inhabitants and selling the rest into slavery.

Three years later he returned to Sicily, destroyed Agrigentum, Gela and Camarina, and conquered most of the island. Syracuse itself seemed likely to fall, but the plague attacked Hannibal's army, and he was glad to make peace with Dionysius, the ruler of Syracuse, and return to Africa. His army brought the plague with it, and it wrought such havoc in Carthage that the Greek cities in Sicily were tempted to rise against their conquerors, and were so successful that only a few strongholds on the western end of the island were left to the Carthaginians. They had, however, large resources, and another army of mercenaries and Carthaginians crossed under Himilco, reduced the revolted cities and again besieged Syracuse. But once more the plague broke out, and Himilco was driven to such straits that he fled with his Carthaginian troops, leaving the mercenaries to their fate. The Carthaginians made various attempts during the next few years to extend their influence in the island, whilst Dionysius tried to drive them out; but at last the war was ended by a treaty fixing the river Halycus as the boundary between the rival powers, and this division held good for a century.

An important event during the next half century was the conclusion of a treaty between Rome and Carthage. Rome had passed through a crisis—the city having been burnt by the Gauls. She

soon recovered her power on the land, but she had little naval strength, and the treaty was decidedly in favour of Carthage. The Romans were precluded from sailing westward beyond Fair Promontory, but received trading privileges in Carthaginian Sicily, Africa and Sardinia, while the Carthaginians were to trade freely with Rome and not to injure the towns on the coast.

Dionysius of Syracuse was succeeded by an incapable son, and when Carthage resumed her aggressive attitude in the island, she seemed likely to conquer all its cities—Syracuse amongst the rest. Alarmed at this state of affairs, the Syracusans appealed to Corinth, their mother city, and Timoleon was sent to help them out of their difficulties. He managed matters so adroitly that the Carthaginians went home of their own accord, thus giving him time to set the affairs of Syracuse in order. They determined, however, to make another effort to conquer the island, and landed a large army at Lilybæum. Timoleon had difficulty in raising an army one-fifth the size of the Carthaginian, but he marched boldly to meet them, and routed them utterly, falling upon them as they crossed the river Crimesus in a flood. The losses of the Carthaginians in this battle were very heavy, and it was feared that Timoleon might even attack Carthage herself, but this he did not attempt. An army was afterwards sent under Gisco, but it achieved little, and the Carthaginians made a treaty with Timoleon which left matters much as they had been before, the territory west of the Halycus being still recognised as Carthaginian.

After Timoleon's death there was peace in Sicily

for a time, and then Syracuse fell under a tyrant named Agathocles, who ruled so unscrupulously and banished so many of the citizens that the Carthaginians were appealed to for help against him. Agathocles was universally hated and lost all Sicily, except Syracuse, where he was hard pressed by the Carthaginians. In order to relieve the tension of the situation, the tyrant suddenly escaped from Syracuse with his fleet and invaded Africa. Winning his first battle by a lucky chance, he overran the country and captured city after city until Carthage stood almost alone. Hearing, however, that affairs at home demanded attention, Agathocles went back for a time, and during his absence his army had bad fortune. When he returned, therefore, seeing no hope of success, he left Africa—abandoning his soldiers to their fate. The army, exasperated at his desertion, slew his sons and then made peace with the Carthaginians, some entering their service, the rest being allowed free passage to their homes.

Carthage had been terrorised by Agathocles for four years, and he had proved how easy it was to invade Africa.

After these events Italy was invaded by Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, a kinsman of Alexander the Great, who burned to emulate his relative's conquests. He proposed to conquer Southern Italy, Sicily and Carthage, but he had not reckoned on the strength of Rome and he found her too hard for him. After two campaigns in Italy he crossed to Sicily to help the Greek cities against Carthage, and he had much success at first, but interfering with the government of the cities he lost popularity and went back to Italy, whence he soon after

returned to Epirus. Early in this war the Carthaginians had offered help to the Roman Senate, and though at first declined it was afterwards accepted, and the Carthaginian fleet attacked Pyrrhus when he was returning from Sicily and destroyed many of his vessels. Had Carthage known what the future held in store for her she might have left Rome to fight her own battles.

CHAPTER III

THE BREACH WITH ROME

THE war between Carthage and Syracuse for the possession of Sicily lasted a century and ended, after the expulsion of Pyrrhus, by leaving the greater part of the island in the hands of the Carthaginians. The war had been fought on both sides by mercenaries, many of whom had come from Campania, a district inhabited at that time by a somewhat reckless people. After the death of Agathocles a band of Campanian mercenaries seized the city of Messina, slew or expelled the citizens and established themselves in their houses, calling themselves "men of Mars," or "Mamertines," and living by brigandage and piracy.

The Mamertines proved dangerous neighbours to the Syracusans, plundering the small towns and infringing upon their territory, so that Hiero, the ruler of Syracuse, took up arms against them, and besieged Messina. When the siege had

lasted some time and the Mamertines saw that surrender was inevitable, they determined to call in a foreign power, and debated whether they would ask aid from Carthage or from Rome. They sent envoys to Rome, and the Romans after some hesitation took the gang of robbers under their protection. Meanwhile the Carthaginian party in Messina had sent news to Carthage of what was happening, and when the Romans arrived, they found the Carthaginians already in possession. The Roman consul Appius Claudius, refused to be foiled, and having got the Carthaginian general into his power he demanded the surrender of the city as the condition of his release.

The Carthaginians were so incensed with their general for thus allowing the Romans to wrest Messina from his grasp without a blow, that they executed him, and sent an army to endeavour to recapture the place. Hiero allied himself with the Carthaginians and attacked the Romans, whose presence in the island threatened Syracuse as well as Carthage. But the Romans proved stronger than the combined forces, and at last Hiero submitted and became their ally. After this they made rapid progress, and soon the whole island, with the exception of certain maritime fortresses in which the Carthaginians were strongly entrenched, had passed under their power.

Carthage still ruled the seas, and when she found that her armies had been overmatched, she betook herself to her fleet, and gave the Romans infinite trouble by sudden descents upon the seaboard towns, not only in Sicily but in Italy itself.

Before Rome could hold her own against Carthage she evidently required a fleet to protect her coasts, and if necessary carry the war into Africa. Now although the Romans had a mercantile marine, they had never been fond of fighting at sea, and it was no easy matter for them to contest with the Carthaginians who were skilled sailors and well versed in the manœuvring and ramming tactics of the time. But the Romans adopted an expedient which made all the naval skill of the Carthaginians worthless and gave them unquestionable superiority. Each ship was fitted with a boarding bridge which swung round and grappled, by means of a sharp claw, with the ship of the enemy. As soon as two vessels drew together, the bridge was dropped, and Roman soldiers poured across, against whose superior strength and arms the half-naked Africans had no chance.

Encouraged by a great naval victory at Mylæ the Senate determined to carry the war into Africa itself, and sent Regulus with an expedition. A fiercely-contested sea fight at Ecnomus resulted in the defeat of the Carthaginians, and the Romans landing in Africa began operations against Carthage. So confident were they now of success that half the army was sent home—Regulus remaining with 15,000 men. It seemed as if the Romans must at once succeed, for the surrounding towns surrendered without a struggle, and the Numidians, who never loved Carthage, rose in rebellion. The Carthaginians lost heart, and sued for peace, but the conditions offered by Regulus were so severe that they resolved to fight to the bitter end. It happened just then

that some Greek mercenaries came across, amongst whom was a Spartan captain named Xanthippus, and the control of military affairs was placed in his hands. Being an excellent general, he inspired them with so much confidence that they defeated Regulus in a pitched battle, made him prisoner, and nearly annihilated his army. The remnant of the Romans entrenched themselves at Clupea and were rescued by their fleet; but on their way home three-fourths of the vessels perished in a storm.

These favours of fortune so encouraged the Carthaginians that they again invaded Sicily, landing a strong force at Lilybæum. The Romans, though discouraged from further attempts to invade Africa, determined to keep Sicily and sent forces for that purpose; and after varied fortune and heavy losses at sea, they won a victory over the Carthaginians at Palermo. The very next year, however, they sustained reverses, losing a great part of their fleet—first in a sea fight at Drepanum, and afterwards in a storm.

The war between Rome and Carthage had now been dragging on for sixteen years, and the Roman losses by sea, land and sickness in Sicily, had been extremely heavy. So far as Carthage was concerned, the loss had been chiefly financial, as the African city carried on her wars largely by the aid of mercenaries; nevertheless she also was weary of the war, and for a while both sides showed slackness. During this period Carthage produced her first great general, Hamilcar Barca, who took over command in Sicily, settling with his forces on Monte Pellegrino and ravaging Sicily and the coasts of Southern Italy at will.

Hamilcar was more than a match for the Roman generals who were sent against him, and as the Carthaginians also held Lilybæum and Drepanum it seemed as if a few years more must see the Romans thrust out of Sicily. At last they made a determined effort to regain their supremacy. The treasury was exhausted, but private citizens came forward and raised a fleet of 200 vessels manned by 60,000 men. The Carthaginians who had allowed their fleet to fall out of repair were taken by surprise and being easily defeated had no option but to conclude a peace, binding themselves to abandon Sicily and the adjacent islands, and to pay an enormous war indemnity. Thus after twenty-four years of fighting the first Punic war came to an end, and the Carthaginians formally surrendered an island they had partially occupied for 400 years.

They were not yet however free from trouble. Hamilcar's mercenaries, most of whom belonged to the desert tribes which surrounded the territory of Carthage, had for years received no wages, and he sent them back to Africa in small detachments, in order that they might be paid off and allowed to scatter to their homes. But the Carthaginian authorities foolishly waited until the whole army had landed, and then tried to curtail their pay and allowances, the result being a mutiny which quickly became an insurrection, and was not quelled without three years of bloodshed.

Whilst this war was in progress, Rome seized the Island of Sardinia, which had been Carthaginian for centuries, so that Carthage emerged from the struggle with the loss of two provinces and the burden of a war indemnity.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF HANNIBAL

AFTER the war with Rome and the Numidian revolt Hamilcar, the Carthaginian general, became the leading man in the State and commander-in-chief for all Africa. He felt that the peace with Rome could only be looked upon as temporary; for though the Romans were satisfied for the moment, the time would come when they would attempt the conquest of Africa, and the entire subjugation of Carthage. It was necessary therefore that Carthage should strengthen her hands and enlarge the area from which her resources could be drawn, yet it was hopeless to think of finding this enlargement in any part of the Mediterranean where Rome had already obtained a footing. Hamilcar's thoughts therefore turned to Spain, a country in which the Phœnicians had settled a thousand years before, and with which Carthage had trafficked for centuries. Surely in Spain his city might be permitted to work out her destiny without Roman interference.

Hamilcar marched from Carthage as if meditating conquest in Africa, but suddenly crossed the Straits of Gibraltar and landed in Spain. We have few details of his work there, but we know that for nine years he toiled, establishing a great province for his country; and not only supporting himself and his army, but sending home large sums of money to Carthage. When he fell in battle he left his son-in-law Hasdrubal to carry

on his work, and he laboured for eight years more at the task of conciliation and consolidation, until Carthage had in Spain a magnificent province and a rich field for enterprise.

For a time the Romans did not actively interfere, and when at length they sent commissioners to Spain to investigate, these were informed that the conquest was undertaken in order to provide means for paying the indemnity. With a view to possible eventualities they made alliance with two Greek towns on the coast, Saguntum and Emporiæ, and notified Hasdrubal of this, warning him at the same time not to push his conquests beyond the Ebro. After ruling the province for eight years Hasdrubal was assassinated, and Hannibal, the eldest son of Hamilcar, was chosen general by the officers of the Spanish army.

This extraordinary man, now in his twenty-ninth year, had seen war from childhood, and had commanded the cavalry under Hasdrubal, his brother-in-law, since the death of his father Hamilcar. He had proved himself a splendid cavalry officer, and was about to prove himself a great general, one of the greatest the world had ever seen.

It is probable that Hamilcar had intended to invade Italy as soon as he became possessed of adequate resources. He had seen how vulnerable Carthage was when attacked, and how her subjects fell from her; and knowing that much of Italy had acknowledged the supremacy of Rome under compulsion, he hoped the subject states would fall from her in the same way if Italy were invaded. Seventeen years had passed since

Hamilcar landed in Spain, and though he and his successor died before their plans could be carried out, they made them feasible by leaving to Hannibal a splendid province and a devoted and highly-trained army. Hannibal determined to lose no time in attacking Rome, and began by besieging Saguntum, the city with which the Romans were in alliance. Saguntum held out for eight months, so that a year was lost before Hannibal could prepare definitely for his attack upon Italy. The Romans evidently did not contemplate being attacked at home, but they sent envoys to Carthage to ask whether it was by order of the government that Hannibal had attacked Saguntum, and as they got no satisfaction the second Punic war began.

Hannibal's Spanish forces amounted to 140,000 men, and after he had sent a detachment to Africa for its protection, and left another with his brother Hasdrubal in Spain, he had 100,000 left for the invasion of Italy. He determined not to expose himself and his army to the perils of the sea, but to reach Italy by way of the Alps, and he had for some time been negotiating with divers Celtic tribes who had promised either neutrality or active assistance. Before he could reach the Alps he had to conquer Spain between the Ebro and the Pyrenees and to cross Southern France. The first part of the journey cost him dear, for the tribes were in arms, and before he reached the Pyrenees his army was diminished by one-fourth. At the Pyrenees he allowed all who were faint-hearted to return home, so that the army with which he entered France was only 60,000 strong

During the progress of Hannibal's preparations the Romans had been culpably negligent especially in connection with the siege of Saguntum. Had they sent an army to Spain to relieve the city, it would have made matters harder for Hannibal; and had they helped the native tribes when they opposed his march from the Ebro to the Pyrenees, he might never have dared to leave Spain. They at last determined to act, and sent Sempronius to Sicily to prepare for the invasion of Africa, whilst Publius Scipio went by way of Marseilles to invade Spain. When Scipio reached Marseilles he heard that Hannibal had already crossed the Pyrenees and was at hand. He therefore determined to contest the passage of the Rhone and made arrangemeats with the Celts to that effect, but Hannibal reached the river four days' march above the point where Scipio was stationed, and, outwitting the Celts on guard, crossed without loss and was three days' march forward on his journey before Scipio reached the ford. Accordingly he gave up the chase and sending the greater part of his army to Spain under his brother Gnæus Scipio, returned with the rest to Italy to await the progress of events.

Meanwhile Hannibal was crossing the Alps, probably by the Little St Bernard pass. This was the route usually taken by the Celts, but though one of the easiest passes, Hannibal found it hard enough. He had done his best to gain the friendship of the mountain tribes, but some of them were implacable, and much of the way had to be won by hard fighting. Apart from this, the natural difficulties to be overcome in getting

an army with its horses, elephants and baggage over the mountains, were very great. The stories told by Livy about melting the rocks by fire and vinegar are pure imagination, but the crossing was an extraordinary feat, especially as it was performed in the beginning of winter by men accustomed to the genial warmth of Spain, and the burning sun of Africa. When at length the mountains were crossed, of the army which left France only one half descended into the plains of Hither Gaul, and these "looked not like men but like their phantoms or their shadows." Had the Romans been ready to attack the worn-out travellers as they descended, there could scarcely have been a doubt as to the result; but they were not there, and Hannibal had time to give his men much-needed rest.

CHAPTER V

THE CONQUEST OF ITALY

HANNIBAL had now about 30,000 men, an army incapable of itself performing the work which he had mapped out, but he confidently expected that the Celtic tribes of Cis-Alpine Gaul among whom he had descended, would rally to his banner from hatred to the Romans. He was disappointed at first, for the Taurini refused to join him, and he had to spend three days in capturing Turin their capital.

Publius Scipio, having landed at Pisa and collected forces, crossed the river Po and

marched to meet Hannibal, whilst Sempronius, who had been recalled from Sicily, was hastening to effect a junction with him. At the Ticinus the cavalry of Rome and Africa met, and the Romans were worsted, Scipio himself being wounded in the encounter. Avoiding a general engagement, therefore, he fell back on Placentia, to await the arrival of his colleague. When Sempronius joined him the Romans were 40,000 strong, and though Scipio was still suffering from his wound, Sempronius determined to bring on a pitched battle, and Hannibal, who had accurate knowledge of all that was passing in the Roman camp, was nothing loth.

The river Trebia lay between the combatants, not deep, but swollen with rain, and very early in the morning Hannibal sent his light cavalry across to skirmish with the Romans and tempt them to pursue. The Roman light-armed troops, falling into the trap, chased the cavalry and suddenly found themselves in a position from which there was no escape, unless the heavy troops came to their support. These crossed and fought bravely, but wet and miserably cold could make but a feeble stand against the vigorous and high-spirited forces of the enemy. The Romans were routed: the first division, 10,000 strong, cut its way through the Carthaginians and escaped to Placentia—the rest were either slaughtered or made prisoners. The season was far advanced, and with this decisive battle the first campaign came to an end, the remains of the Roman army sheltering in the fortresses, whilst Hannibal spent the winter resting his army and organising an insurrection

amongst the Celtic tribes which spread with great rapidity. Such was the effect of the battle of the Trebia upon the Celts that more than 60,000 of them joined his army.

Although the news of this disaster caused annoyance in Rome, no one thought of serious danger, and Flaminius and Servilius, the new consuls, were sent in leisurely fashion to block the passes over the Apennines lest Hannibal should attempt to pass southward into Italy in the spring; or to cross and attack him in the valley of the Po, in the event of his remaining there on the defensive, which seemed more probable. The Romans did not yet understand the man with whom they had to deal. Hannibal had no intention of remaining on the defensive. He knew right well that the power of Rome was greater than that of any army he could bring against her, unless he could persuade her subjects to rebel. Now, so far as concerned the Celtic tribes he had done well enough. But the Celtic tribes were not properly members of the Roman confederacy: it was the Italians, and above all the Latins, who must help him if his enterprise was to be successful. It was no part of his programme therefore to remain north of the Apennines; and in the early spring, before the Romans deemed the roads passable, he marched southward. There were apparently but two roads a general could take in coming south, either by Ariminum or by Arezzo, so Servilius was posted at the former, Flaminius at the latter. But Hannibal found a third, and brought men down the western side of Italy by a road which led the armies for days through the marshes of

the Arno. The march was most distressing, many died, and Hannibal lost an eye through ophthalmia, but he gained his point and turned the Roman position. Flaminius had talked boastfully about what he would do if he were sent against Hannibal, and great was his chagrin at being outwitted. Hannibal, knowing his man, passed him as if he did not exist, and began pillaging the country on every side, until Flaminius lost patience utterly, and instead of waiting for the other consul to join him, marched rapidly after Hannibal. When Hannibal knew that Flaminius was giving chase he waylaid him, occupying the heights overlooking the road skirting the Trasimene Lake. The Romans marched into this valley in the morning mist, and suddenly found themselves surrounded on every side. Fighting was almost impossible, many were drowned in the lake, the rest were slaughtered. A few, six thousand in all, cut their way through and escaped but only to be captured next day. Now at last Rome was roused to a sense of her danger. Etruria was lost, no army lay between Hannibal and the capital, and if he chose to march upon the city, there was nothing to bar his way. Fortifications were at once thrown up and manned, the bridges broken down, new legions levied. Hannibal, however, did not trouble himself about Rome, but marched east to the Adriatic where, in lovely weather and amidst pleasant surroundings, his troops reposed for a time.

The victories at the Trebia and on the Trasimene Lake gave Hannibal so much spoil that he was able to arm and organise his African

soldiers on the Roman plan, and when he had done this at his leisure, he marched southward through the Samnian territory. He had expected much help from the Samnites, the fiercest foes with which Rome had contended in earlier times. But things had changed now, and Hannibal's heart must have sunk within him as town after town closed its gates. Then he thought that the Campanians might revolt, and so he marched towards Capua, but was again disappointed, and, turning eastward, he made his way to Apulia.

The Romans recovered from their fright and sent another army to try its fortune, commanded by Fabius, an old and obstinate but able general. Fabius, adopting a new policy, avoided a pitched battle, and tried to wear out Hannibal by watching him, cutting off stragglers and making it difficult for him to obtain supplies. At length, however, the Romans, tired of so much caution, appointed Minucius to an independent command with orders to hasten matters, whereupon he was tempted into battle, and would have been annihilated had not Fabius come to the rescue.

Notwithstanding this reverse the Senate determined to take the offensive, and opened the next campaign by sending an army of 90,000 men against Hannibal, whose forces were not more than half that number. Hannibal had captured Cannæ, a Roman citadel, and the generals took up a position between Cannæ and the Carthaginian camp and offered battle. Hannibal's arrangement of his troops was masterly. The Romans advanced in deep files, Hannibal in the form of a crescent, the Celtic troops meeting the enemy first, the heavier troops who formed the

horns of the crescent being drawn back. The Celts, unable to withstand the Roman legions, gradually retired, but as they did so, the horns of the crescent with Hannibal's African and Spanish troops closed, and soon the Romans found themselves hemmed in—front and flank. To make matters worse the heavy Carthaginian cavalry, having in successive charges scattered the Roman cavalry on both wings, once more wheeled and attacked the Romans in the rear. The rest was slaughter. The Romans, crowded in a mass, could not use their weapons and were cut down where they stood. In that battle fell the consul, Lucius Paulus; Servilius; the proconsul, Minucius; the flower of the Roman staff-officers, and 70,000 men. Now indeed was Rome shaken to her foundations.

CHAPTER VI

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

It is natural to wonder why Hannibal did not make a dash at Rome after Cannæ, and Maharbal, his cavalry officer, is said to have advised this course. Had he done so, he might by a lucky stroke have gained possession of the city, and been able to dictate his own terms to the enemy, but such good fortune was unlikely. Rome was well fortified and, though he had slain one-seventh of the Italians capable of bearing arms, every citizen was a soldier, and enough remained to stand a prolonged siege—a work for which his

army had no aptitude even had it been large enough. On the other hand it seemed certain that the effect of Cannæ would be to break down the Roman confederacy and give Hannibal many allies; and for these he determined to wait. For a time it seemed as if his hopes were to be fulfilled, for many of the Bruttians, Lucanians, Apulians and Samnites declared in his favour, so that he had a large following in Lower Italy. Capua, the chief city in Campania and second city in Italy, also passed over to him, and as it could put 30,000 men in the field this was no small gain. But the Latin colonies in Southern Italy, the South Italian Greeks and the Greek cities of Campania, adhered resolutely to Rome. Had Hannibal's army been big enough to enable him to conquer these cities and garrison them in detail all might have been well, but it was not, and the hostility of so many important places made the friendship of the rest of little avail. At Rome the terrible misfortune of the battle of Cannæ sobered the people, hushed their political bickerings and restored the sense of unity between rich and poor. The magnitude of the disaster was so great that there was hardly a house in which there was not one dead, and the common loss led to common sympathy. Reforms were set on foot in every department, and above all the practice of sending civil officers to command armies, regardless of military qualifications, was given up and experienced men chosen instead.

While his enemies were thus setting their house in order and preparing with stern purpose for the future, Hannibal failed to receive the reinforcements he had hoped for either from Spain

or Carthage. His brother Hasdrubal was loyal to his interests in Spain and would gladly have sent help, but he had been worsted by the Scipios and they commanded all the routes by which he could have passed. The Carthaginians on the other hand were culpably negligent. Hannibal had a right to expect that they would at once send reinforcements on the most generous scale, but through political jealousy they deliberately refrained from so doing and contented themselves with wasting their strength in Sicily and sending him a miserable contingent of 4000 men when they might just as easily have sent him 40,000. Had they from the beginning disavowed Hannibal and all his works, and told the Romans so, their position would have been intelligible; but they had not done this; they were actually at war with Rome in various places, yet they neglected Hannibal and thus sacrificed their greatest general, their best prospects, and, as it turned out, their existence itself.

The battle of Cannæ brought Hannibal's fortunes to a climax. Not that they at once began to fall. For thirteen years after that battle he remained in Italy, unconquered and unconquerable. But as time went on, and his resources steadily diminished whilst those of his antagonists increased, he knew that his great design, magnificently conceived and, so far as his own part was concerned, magnificently executed, had failed, and that the city which had given him birth, but which had proved unworthy of him, was doomed.

It is scarcely necessary to follow in detail the rest of Hannibal's career in Italy. His troops

spent the winter after Cannæ in Capua, and next year again took the field. The Romans began the campaign with three armies, and were so cautious that Hannibal made no further progress. On the field of battle he could hold his own with any and every foe, but when his enemies stood on the defensive his limited forces could accomplish little against them. He made an effort to obtain the help of Philip, king of Macedonia, but it came to nothing; in Sicily, Hiero, who had been so faithful an ally to Rome, died, and Hieronymus, his successor, declared for Carthage but was assassinated, and though the Romans had plenty of trouble in the island, no substantial help came to Hannibal from that quarter.

In Spain the struggle went on continually, and with many changes of fortune. Publius and Gnæus Scipio were there—such excellent generals and administrators that they almost drove the Cathaginians from Spain. They even fomented rebellion against them in Africa, so that Hasdrubal, Hannibal's brother, had to cross the straits. Hasdrubal was, however, successful in pacifying Africa; and returning with Massinissa, a brilliant African general, he defeated and killed the Scipios and regained for Carthage all Spain south of the Ebro. Next year the Romans sent Claudius Nero to Spain, but he proved unsuccessful, so Cornelius Scipio, the son of Publius Scipio who had been slain, was appointed to the command—a young man afterwards destined to become famous as Scipio Africanus.

Cornelius Scipio began his career in Spain brilliantly, surprising New Carthage (Cartagena)

with the Phœnician war stores, and recovering a large section of Spain for Rome.

Next year Hasdrubal determined to help his brother at all hazards, and accordingly set out on his march to Italy. Scipio is said to have worsted him at Baccula on the Guadalquiver, but the defeat cannot have been very serious, for Hasdrubal went on his way to the Pyrenees, and in the spring of the following year crossed the Alps.

Meanwhile Hannibal had barely held his own. Rome had now, in one place or another, 200,000 men in the field, and although the burden was heavy, she was slowly regaining what she had lost. Hannibal had a little good fortune from time to time. He captured the important city of Tarentum, but failed to take the citadel, which remained in the hands of the Roman garrison. On the other hand he lost Capua, which was besieged by the Romans for two years, and which he in vain endeavoured to relieve. On one occasion he marched on Rome, hoping thus to induce the armies lying round Capua to leave their fortified lines, but they were too wary, and after encamping within five miles of Rome, he returned. When at last Capua fell, notwithstanding his best efforts, it was a sign to Italy that Hannibal had reached the limit of his power and that the end drew near. He did all he could, but his forces were not large enough to enable him both to win and to keep, and at last he had to withdraw to the south-west corner of the peninsula.

This then was the condition of Hannibal's affairs when Hasdrubal crossed the Alps, and we can well understand how urgently Hannibal must

have entreated him to come. The Romans, aware of Hasdrubal's intentions, made their preparations with care. Two armies were in the field, the army of the north under Livius waiting for Hasdrubal, whilst that of the south under Nero watched Hannibal. Hasdrubal sent a letter to his brother explaining his intentions and proposing a place of meeting, but the letter fell into the hands of Nero, who, profiting by the information gained, took 8000 picked troops, hastened north, joined Livius, and came upon Hasdrubal at the Metaurus. The Carthaginian army, taken at a serious disadvantage, was destroyed, and Hasdrubal himself slain. Nero returned at once to the south and threw Hasdrubal's head to his brother's outposts. It was carried to Hannibal, and the brave general, his last hope gone, retired to Bruttium, from the ports of which he could at will escape to Africa.

The defeat of Hasdrubal was a greater disaster to Carthage than it seemed. It destroyed Hannibal's hopes, about which the Carthaginians cared little, but it went further, for it made the loss of Spain a certainty, and the loss of Spain released Cornelius Scipio, the only general capable of undertaking the invasion of Africa. Scipio captured Gades, and having driven Mago, the youngest brother of Hannibal, out of Spain, returned to Rome, where he was reappointed general with orders to carry the war into Africa.

The Carthaginians at last acted with vigour, sending Mago to Genoa to rouse the Celts, and sending reinforcements to Hannibal. But it was too late to help Hannibal, and too late to prevent invasion. Scipio made his preparations in

leisurely fashion in Sicily, and landed unopposed near Utica with 30,000 men. Unfortunately, the Carthaginians had alienated Massinissa, formerly so helpful to Hasdrubal in Spain, having taken Syphax, their former enemy, into favour and deprived Massinissa of his possessions. He now at once joined Scipio and became an invaluable ally.

Scipio was not at first successful, and had to entrench himself during the winter, but next year he surprised and burnt the Carthaginian camp and routed their forces. The peace party in Carthage now came forward, and Scipio, anxious to close the war, offered reasonable terms, and sent envoys to Rome to obtain their confirmation. But the Carthaginians, ever wavering, recalled Hannibal and Mago, and determined to try the fortune of war once more. Mago had been wounded and died on the voyage, but Hannibal came at once, "leaving," says Livy, "the country of his enemies with more regret than many an exile has left his own." It was thirty-six years since he had trod his native soil, fifteen of these years had been spent in Italy, and he had never been seriously defeated.

Hannibal did not at once meet Scipio in battle. He wintered at Hadrumetum, and made efforts to win the Numidian chiefs to alliance. At last, however, the two great generals met at Zama, and a decisive battle was fought. Much of Hannibal's army consisted of unseasoned Carthaginian troops, and although his veterans fought like lions, they could not prevail, and the Phœnician army was annihilated. Hannibal escaped to Hadrumetum with a handful of followers.

After such a battle there was nothing to be thought of but peace, and Scipio proposed terms which, though severe, were not unreasonable, and do credit to his generosity. By these terms, as they were afterwards definitely fixed at Rome, the Carthaginians had to give up all claim to Spain and the islands of the Mediterranean, to recognise Massinissa as king of Numidia, to refrain from waging war, unless with the consent of Rome, and to pay a large indemnity. The second Punic war therefore left Carthage a town instead of an empire, and made Rome supreme in the Western Mediterranean.

CHAPTER VII

DELENDA EST CARTHAGO

THE enterprise begun by Hamilcar, and carried on by Hasdrubal and Hannibal, had ended disastrously for Carthage, and it would have been well had it never been undertaken. Yet we must remember that Hamilcar had conceived the foundation of the Spanish empire after Rome had unjustly interfered in Sicily, thrusting Carthage out of a province which she had held for 400 years. There is nothing to show that either Hamilcar or Hannibal contemplated the destruction of Rome. Their only desire was to humble her, to keep her ambition within proper limits, and to make good terms for their own state. It would not have been well had Africa triumphed over Europe, but it would have been better for

Rome and for humanity had the city learnt humility at this stage in her history.

During the next half century Rome expanded greatly as an empire, but decayed in morality; she became mistress of the world, but lost the mastery over herself — earnest endeavour and patriotism making way for greed, selfishness and cruelty.

Hannibal was now the first citizen in Carthage, and he at once set himself to reform the abuses which existed in the state, filling up the council of "The Hundred" by election instead of co-option, and so improving the financial system that the Carthaginians scarcely felt the enormous indemnity which they had to pay. But in every state the reformer creates enemies for himself, and Hannibal's enemies are said to have wickedly accused him to the Romans, as intending to make war upon them again. They therefore demanded his surrender, and as his friends were unable to protect him, he fled to Tyre, and from Tyre to the court of Antiochus, king of Syria. After the defeat of the Syrians by the Romans, he took refuge in Bithynia and for some years was unmolested, but at last the hatred of the Romans followed him even there, and rather than become a prisoner he took poison. Thus died at the age of sixty-four the greatest military genius of the ancient world, and in the same year died Scipio Africanus, the only man who could boast that he had vanquished him.

Carthage, like most great cities, recuperated rapidly after the cessation of war, for though she had lost her dominions she retained her trade. Had she been left alone, she would soon have

been as formerly the first commercial city in the world, but this was not to be. There was a clause in the treaty which forbade her to declare war without the consent of Rome, and this clause prevented self-defence when the Carthaginians were attacked. Massinissa, their neighbour, did not hesitate to take advantage of their position, constantly encroaching upon their territory, and when they appealed to Rome they got no redress. Cato, a Roman senator, was sent at the head of a commission to settle one of these disputes. He was a miserably narrow-minded man, and when he saw how prosperous Carthage was, notwithstanding her reverses, he determined to compass her destruction, and from that moment, no matter what the subject of his speeches might be, he ended them with the brutal words: "Also I say that Carthage must be destroyed."

At last the encroachments of Massinissa becoming unbearable, the Carthaginians took up arms against him, thus breaking the terms of the treaty. An embassy was sent to Rome to explain the circumstances, but the Romans had been waiting for the chance, Cato's persistence had carried the day, the fiat had gone forth, the city was doomed.

An army was prepared and sent under Manilius and Censorinus the consuls, nor did the Carthaginians know of a certainty that war had been declared until the fleet had sailed. Even then they tried to bring the Romans to reason, humbling themselves in every way and sending envoys with power to make peace on any terms. The Senate promised to guarantee territory, freedom and property to the Carthaginians, if they would

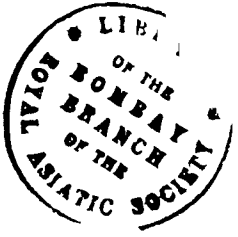
send 300 hostages, and perform whatever else the consuls demanded. The Carthaginians sent the hostages gladly, upon which the consuls demanded the disarming of the city. Had there been a statesman amongst the Carthaginians, he would now have seen whither things were tending and would have refused to go further. But there was no master-mind in Carthage, and the council obsequiously surrendered all the arms in the city. When the surrender was complete the consuls announced that the city was to be destroyed, but that the inhabitants could settle wherever else they liked so long as it was ten miles from the sea-shore. Now indeed the Carthaginians saw how they had been betrayed, and sternly prepared for resistance, gaining time by pretended negotiations. The gates were closed, and night and day, men, women and children toiled, making arms to take the place of those which had been surrendered, so that when the consuls approached, hoping to enter without resistance, they found the battlements crowded with armed men. Carthage was a strong city, for it stood on a promontory surrounded on three sides by the sea, whilst on the landward side it was strongly fortified. The consuls had also to deal with inland forces, for the territory belonging to Carthage was still capable of keeping an army in the field. They therefore had no easy task to perform, their first efforts ended in failure, and had it not been for the ability shown by an adopted son of Scipio Africanus the expedition would have ended in disaster.

The consuls who had brought the army to Africa were superseded by Piso and Mancinus,

who were as unsuccessful as their predecessors, and but for intrigues and the absence of generalship amongst the Carthaginians things might have gone badly for Rome.

At last the Romans lost patience and gave the command to Scipio, electing him consul before the usual time. With his appointment fresh energy was put into the siege, and discipline, which had become greatly relaxed, was re-established. The Megara, a quarter of Carthage inhabited by the wealthy classes, was captured, and the defenders had to abandon the outer works and congregate inside the city. The siege now became a blockade, and in order more effectually to cut off Carthage from the outer world, Scipio constructed a mole, which closed the harbour with the Carthaginians' ships inside. With extraordinary pertinacity the Carthaginians made a new entrance and a new fleet, and but for short-sightedness, might have taken the Romans by surprise and destroyed their fleet. Unfortunately they missed the golden opportunity. The summer of that year passed away, and Scipio with all his genius had not made any very great impression upon the city, but during the winter famine and pestilence did their work, so that when he renewed the attack in the spring his task proved more easy. First the harbour was captured, and then the streets were stormed during six days of fighting and massacre—the Romans only advancing step by step, so desperate was the resistance of the citizens. At last the citadel was reached, to facilitate his operations against which Scipio ordered that the surrounding streets should be burnt and levelled, and in

the conflagration thousands who had concealed themselves in the cellars perished. A deputation came from the citadel to plead for mercy, and when Scipio granted bare life, 50,000 men, women and children issued forth. Only 900 Roman deserters remained, and these, knowing that there was no hope of mercy for them, and maddened by famine, set fire to the temple in which they had congregated and perished in the flames. A considerable portion of the city still remained, and Scipio, willing to save it, sent to Rome for further instructions. Notwithstanding his appeal and the earnest pleading of a few noble men, the Senate sent the pitiless command to destroy the city utterly, and to plough up the ground upon which it stood. The command was carried out, the ruins burned for seventeen days, and when all was silent, Scipio, by order of the Senate, pronounced a solemn curse upon any who should dare to rebuild the city. Rome had her wish—the long struggle was at an end—Carthage was no more.



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